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THE

BRITISH THEATRE.

THE

BRITISH THEATRE;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XIV.

MAN OF THE WORLD.
FOUNDLING.
GAMESTER.
ROMAN FATHER.
EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1808.

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1895

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
BEDFORD BURY.

MAN OF THE WORLD.
SIR PERTINAX — WHAT IS THE MATTER, WI-
TH HER?

THE

MAN OF THE WORLD;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By CHARLES MACKLIN.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY Mrs. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRINTER,
LONDON.

REMARKS.

This comedy was written by a man of that peculiar frame of body and mind, which enabled him to contend against the sickness of the one, and the sorrows of the other, for the period of near a hundred years.

Macklin was born in Ireland at the very beginning of the last century, and died in England at the close of it. His occupation throughout his long life was that of an actor; though chance, more than inclination, directed his steps towards the stage.

His performance of the jew, in "The Merchant of Venice," was so perfect a representation of maliguant human nature; so congenial were the countenance and manners he gave to this black character, which Shakspeare's genius formed, that every other part, in which he appeared, is seemingly forgotten, in the minute remembrance of all he did in Shylock.

That the author of this comedy had a capacious understanding, this production, as well as his skill as an actor, will testify. His "Man of the World" could only be written by one, capable of making the nicest observations on all he saw there. It is an excellent lesson for politicians and courtiers. Sir Pertinax is the

spirit of Lord Chesterfield, embodied, and hung up to view as an example to shun, instead of a pattern to imitate; whilst his son speaks sentiments, of no common-place truth, but such as are rarely conceived either in fictitious or real characters, though they are such as every honest heart will expand to acknowledge.

This play was written many years before it was performed in London. It first appeared in Dublin, where it was well received; but reasons of a political nature advised a delay in bringing it before a London audience, that events might perhaps arise in the administration of public affairs, so as to favour, rather than injure, its reception.

The elevation of Mr. Pitt to the high office of prime minister—from which occurrence it was confidently expected, that all ancient failings in that hazardous department would cease, and ministerial regeneration ensue—this seemed the happy era for "The Man of the World" to be introduced on the stage of the metropolis. To hold up to detestation vices, now no longer to be tolerated, could give offence to none—at least to none in power to resent the affront.

The temper of the times was accurately estimated, and this drama, after encountering some vain hisses from a dissatisfied minority, was finally established a favourite with the whole town.

Yet the opposition on the first night of its appearance was so violent in some scenes, whilst the followers of the new minister were such enthusiastic admirers of those very parts which gave displeasure, that plaudits and counter-plaudits lengthened the

time of performance nearly to midnight, before the aye and the noes became all of one mind. This wished for agreement was effected by the following line in the epilogue; which, after dwelling on the author's great age, and how much he was esteemed in his younger days, adds—

" Then shield your fathers' favourite to the last."

On this sacred appeal to the memory of their parents, all parties united, and the venerable author was hailed with shouts of triumph.

Macklin performed Sir Pertinax himself, and so excellently, that it was imagined he could never be surpassed by any other representative of this Scotch politician. Cooke, his successor, has proved the falsity of this conjecture. Macklin performed Sir Pertinax most excellently; but Cooke performs Sir Pertinax with talents as pre-eminent, as Macklin displayed above all others in the character of Shylock.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD LUMBERCOURT	*Mr. Waddy.*
SIR PERTINAX MACSYCOPHANT	*Mr. Cooke.*
EGERTON	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
MELVILLE	*Mr. Murray.*
SERGEANT EITHERSIDE	*Mr. Davenport.*
COUNSELLOR PLAUSIBLE	*Mr. Beverly.*
SIDNEY	*Mr. Brunton.*
TOMLINS	*Mr. Abbot.*
SAM	*Mr. Truman.*
JOHN	*Mr. Atkins.*
LADY RODOLPHA LUMBERCOURT	*Mrs. Glover.*
LADY MACSYCOPHANT	*Miss Leserve.*
CONSTANTIA	*Miss Brunton.*
BETTY HINT	*Mrs. Mattocks.*
NANNY	*Miss Cox.*

SCENE—Sir Pertinax Macsycophant's House, ten miles from London.

THE

MAN OF THE WORLD.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter BETTY *and* FOOTMAN.

Betty. The postman is at the gate, Sam, pray step and take in the letters.

Sam. John the gardener is gone for them, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. Bid John bring them to me, Sam; tell him, I'm here in the library.

Sam. I will send him to your ladyship in a crack, madam. [*Exit* SAM.

Enter NANNY.

Nanny. Miss Constantia desires to speak to you Mistress Betty.

Betty. How is she now, Nanny? Any better?

Nanny. Something—but very low spirited still. I verily believe it is as you say.

Betty. Nay, I would take my oath of it, I cannot be deceived in that point, Nanny. Ay, she is certainly breeding, *depend upon it.*

Nanny. Why, so the housekeeper thinks too.

Betty. Oh, if she is not, there is no bread in nine loaves; nay, I know the father, the man that ruined her.

Nanny. The deuce you do!

Betty. As sure as you are alive, Nanny, or I am greatly deceived—And yet I can't be deceived neither. —Was not that the cook that came galloping so hard over the common just now?

Nanny. The same; how very hard he gallopped; he has been but three quarters of an hour, he says, coming from Hyde Park Corner!

Betty. And what time will the family be down?

Nanny. He has orders to have dinner ready by five. There are to be lawyers, and a great deal of company here—He fancies there is to be a private wedding to-night between our young Master Charles and Lord Lumbercourt's daughter, the Scotch lady; who, he says, is just come from Bath, on purpose to be married to him.

Betty. Ay, Lady Rodolpha! nay, like enough, for I know it has been talked of a good while—Well, go tell Miss Constantia, that I will be with her immediately.

Nanny. I shall, Mrs. Betty. [*Exit* NANNY.

Betty. So! I find they all begin to suspect her condition: that's pure; it will soon reach my lady's ears, I warrant.

Enter JOHN, *with Letters.*

Well, John, ever a letter for me?

John. No, Mrs. Betty; but here's one for Miss Constantia.

Betty. Give it me—hum—My lady's hand.

John. And here is one, which the postman says is for my young master—But it is a strange direction. [Reads.] *To Charles Egerton, Esq.*

Betty. Oh, yes, yes!—that is for Master Charles

John; for he has dropped his father's name of Macsycophant, and has taken up that of Egerton. The Parliament has ordered it.

John. The Parliament!—Pr'ythee why so, Mrs. Betty?

Betty. Why you must know, John, that my lady, his mother, was an Egerton by her father; she stole a match with our old master. Sir Stanley Egerton, that you just mentioned, dying an old bachelor, and mortally hating our old master, and the whole gang of the Macsycophants—he left his whole estate to Master Charles, who was his godson; but on condition though that he should drop his father's name of Macsycophant, and take up that of Egerton, and that is the reason, John, why the parliament has made him change his name.

John. I am glad that Master Charles has got the estate, however; for he is a sweet tempered gentleman.

Betty. As ever lived—But come, John, as I know you love Miss Constantia, and are fond of being where she is, I will make you happy—You shall carry her letter to her.

John. Shall I, Mrs. Betty? I am very much obliged to you. Where is she?

Betty. In the housekeeper's room, settling the desert. —Give me Mr. Egerton's letter, and I will leave it on the table, in his dressing room.—I see it is from his brother, Sandy.—So, now go and deliver your letter to your sweetheart, John.

John. That I will; and I am much beholden to you for the favour of letting me carry it to her; for though she should never have me, yet I shall always love her, and wish to be near her, she is so sweet a creature—Your servant, Mrs. Betty. [*Exit.*

Betty. Your servant John, ha! ha! ha! poor fellow! He perfectly dotes on her; and daily follows her about, with nosegays and fruit—and the first of every *thing in the season*—Ay, and my young Master Charles

too, is in as bad a way as the gardener—in short everybody loves her, and that is one reason why I hate her—for my part I wonder what the deuce the men see in her—A creature, that was taken in for charity!—I am sure she is not so handsome. I wish she was out of the family once; if she was, I might then stand a chance of being my lady's favourite myself. Ay, and perhaps of getting one of my young masters for a sweetheart, or at least the chaplain—but as to him there would be no such great catch if I should get him I will try for him, however; and my first step shall be to let the doctor know all I have discovered about Constantia's intrigues with her spark at Hadley—Yes that will do; for the doctor loves to talk with me, and always smiles and jokes with me, and he loves to hear me talk—And I verily believe, he! he! he! that he has a sneaking kindness for me, and this story I know will make him have a good opinion of my honesty—And that, I am, sure will be one step towards—Oh! bless me—here he comes—and my young master with him——I'll watch an opportunity to speak to him, as soon as he is alone, for I will blow her up, I am resolved, as great a favourite, and as cunning as she is. [*Exit.*

Enter EGERTON *and* SIDNEY.

Eger. I have done, sir,—You have refused. I have nothing more to say upon the subject—I am satisfied.

Sid. Come, come, correct this warmth, it is the only weak ingredient in your nature; and you ought to watch it carefully. From your earliest youth your father has honoured me with the care of your education, and the general conduct of your mind; and however singular and morose his behaviour may be towards others, to me he has ever been respectful and liberal. I am now under his roof too—and because I will not abet an unwarrantable passion, in direct opposition *to your father's* hopes and happiness, you blame—you *angrily break from* me, and call me unkind.

Eger. Dear Sidney—for my warmth I stand condemned, but for my marriage with Constantia, I think I can justify it upon every principle of filial duty, honour, and worldly prudence.

Sid. Only make that appear, Charles, and you know you may command me.

Eger. I am sensible how unseemly it appears in a son, to descant on the unamiable passions of a parent; but as we are alone, and friends, I cannot help observing, in my own defence, that when a father will not allow the use of reason to any of his family;—when his pursuit of greatness makes him a slave abroad only to be a tyrant at home—and when, merely to gratify his own ambition he would marry his son into a family he detests—sure, Sidney, a son thus circumstanced (from the dignity of human nature, and the feelings of a loving heart) has a right—not only to protest against the blindness of the parent, but to pursue those measures that virtue and happiness point out.

Sid. The violent temper of Sir Pertinax, I own, cannot on many occasions be defended; but still your intended alliance with Lord Lumbercourt—

Eger. Oh! contemptible! a trifling, quaint, debauched, voluptuous, servile fool, the mere lackey of party and corruption, who for a mean, slavish, factious prostitution of near thirty years, and the ruin of a noble fortune, has had the despicable satisfaction, and the infamous honour, of being kicked up and kicked down—kicked in, and kicked out—just as the insolence, compassion, or, the conveniency of leaders, predominated; and now—being forsaken by all parties,—his whole political consequence amounts to the power of franking a letter, and the right honourable privilege of not paying a tradesman's bill.

Sid. Well, but dear Charles, You are not to wed my lord, but his daughter.

Eger. Who is as disagreeable for a companion, as her father is for a friend or an ally.

Sid. [*Laughing.*] What, her Scotch accent, I suppose, offends you?

Eger. No;—upon my honour—not in the least. I think it entertaining in her—but were it otherwise, —in decency—and indeed in national affection (being a Scotchman myself) I can have no objection to her on that account—besides she is my near relation.

Sid. So I understand. But, pray, Charles, how came Lady Rodolpha, who I find was born in England, to be bred in Scotland.

Eger. From the dotage of an old, formal, obstinate, stiff, rich, Scotch grandmother; who upon a promise of leaving this grandchild all her fortune, would have the girl sent to her to Scotland, when she was but a year old; and there has she been bred up ever since, with this old lady, in all the vanity, splendour, and unlimited indulgence, that fondness and admiration could bestow on a spoiled child, a fancied beauty, and a pretended wit.

Sid. Why, Charles, it is a delicate point, unfit for me to determine—besides, your father has set his heart upon the match—

Eger. All that I know—But still I ask and insist upon your candid judgment——Is she the kind of woman that you think could possibly contribute to my happiness? I beg you will give me an explicit answer.

Sid. The subject is disagreeable—but since I must speak, I do not think she is.

Eger. I know you do not; and I am sure you never will advise the match.

Sid. I never did—I never will.

Eger. You make me happy—which I assure you I never could be, with your judgment against me in *this point.*

Sid. And yet, Charles, give me leave to observe, that Lady Rodolpha has a goodness of heart, and a kind of vivacity, that not only entertains, but, upon seeing her two or three times, improves upon you, and when her torrent of spirits abates, and she condescends to converse gravely—you really like her.

Eger. Why, ay; she is sprightly, good-humoured, has principles, and a good heart. But in a partner for life, Sidney (you know your own precept—your own judgment) affection, capricious in its nature, must have something, even in the external manners—— nay, in the very mode, not only of beauty but of virtue itself—which both heart and judgment must approve; or, our happiness in that delicate point cannot be lasting.

Sid. I grant it.

Eger. And that mode, that amiable essential, I never can meet with—but in Constantia. You sigh!

Sid. No, I only wish, that Constantia had a fortune equal to yours—but, pray, Charles, suppose I had been so indiscreet as to have agreed to marry you to Constantia, would she have consented, think you?

Eger. That I cannot say positively; but I suppose so.

Sid. Did you never speak to her then upon that subject?

Eger. In general terms only: never directly requested her consent in form. But I will this very moment —for I have no asylum from my father's arbitrary design, but my Constantia's arms.—Pray do not stir from hence. I will return instantly.

[*Exit* EGERTON.

Sid. Poor Charles! he little dreams, that I love Constantia too; but to what degree I knew not myself, till he importuned me to join their hands—Yes, I love, but must not be a rival; for he is dear to me as fraternal fondness—My benefactor, my friend!

C

Enter BETTY, *running up to him.*

Betty. I beg your worship's pardon for my intru sion; I hope I do not disturb your reverence.

Sid. Not in the least, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. I humbly beg pardon, sir.—but I—I—wanted to break my mind to your honour about a—a—a scruple—that—that lies upon my conscience—and indeed I should not have presumed to trouble yo —but that I know you are my young master's friend and my old master's friend, and my lady's friend, an indeed a friend to the whole family—for to give yo your due, sir, you are as good a preacher as ever wer into a pulpit.

Sid. Ha! ha! ha! do you think so, Mrs. Betty?

Betty. Ay, in truth do I—and as good a gentlema too, as ever came into a family, and one that neve gives a servant a hard word; nor that does any on an ill-turn—neither behind one's back, nor before one' face.

Sid. Ha! ha! ha! Why you are a mighty wel spoken woman, Mrs. Betty: and I am mightily be holden to you for your good character of me.

Betty. Indeed, sir, it is no more than you deserve and what all the servants say of you.

Sid. I am much obliged to them, Mrs. Betty But pray what are your commands with me?

Betty. Why I will tell your reverence—to be sur I am but a servant, as a body may say; and every tul should stand upon its own bottom—but——

[*She takes hold of him familiarly, looking firs about very cautiously, and speaks in a low fa miliar tone of great secrecy.*

My young master is now in the china room;—in clos conference with Miss Constantia. I know what they are about—but that is no business of mine—and there fore *I made bold* to listen a little, because you know

sir, one would be sure—before one took away any body's reputation.

Sid. Very true, Mrs. Betty—very true, indeed.

Betty. Oh! Heavens forbid that I should take away any young woman's good name, unless I had a reason for it—but, sir—if I am in this place alive—as I listened with my ear close to the door, I heard my young master ask Miss Constantia the plain marriage question—Upon which I started—I trembled—nay, my very conscience stirred within me so——that I could not help peeping through the keyhole.

Sid. Ha! ha! ha! and so your conscience made you peep through the keyhole, Mrs. Betty?

Betty. It did indeed, your reverence. And there I saw my young master upon his knees—Lord bless us; kissing her hand, as if he would eat it! and protesting and assuring her, he knew that your worship would consent to the match. And then the tears ran down her cheeks as fast——

Sid. Ay!

Betty. They did indeed, sir;—I would not tell your reverence a lie for the world.

Sid. I believe it, Mrs. Betty. And what did Constantia say to all this?

Betty. Oh! Oh! she is sly enough—She looks as if butter would not melt in her mouth—but all is not gold that glisters—smooth water, you know runs deepest. I am sorry, very sorry, indeed—my young master makes himself such a fool—but——um!——ha!——take my word for it; he is not the man—for though she looks as modest as a maid at a christening—yet—a—when sweethearts meet—in the dusk of the evening—and stay together a whole hour——in the dark grove—and—a—aha! embrace—and kiss—and—weep at parting—why then—then you know—ah! it is easy to guess all the rest.

Sid. Why, did Constantia meet any body in this manner?

Betty. Oh! Heavens! I beg your worship will not misapprehend me! for I assure you, I do not believe they did any harm—that is—not in the grove——at least not when I was there—and she may be honestly married, for aught I know.—She may be very honest, for aught I know—Heaven forbid I should say any harm of her—I only say—that they did meet in the dark walk—and perhaps nine months hence—ay—remember, sir,—I said that—a—certain person in this family—nine months hence—may ask me to stand godmother—only remember—for I think I know what's what—when I see it, as well as another.

Sid. No doubt you do, Mrs. Betty—ha! ha! ha! no doubt on't.

Betty. I do indeed, sir; and so your servant, sir; [*Going, returns.*] but I hope your worship will not mention my name in this business;—or, that you had any item from me about it.

Sid. I shall not, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. For indeed, sir, I am no busy body, nor do I love tending or proving—and I assure you, sir, I hate all tittling and tattling—and gossiping, and backbiting—and taking away a person's character.

Sid. I observe you do, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. I do indeed, sir;—I am the farthest from it of any person in the world.

Sid. I dare say you are.

Betty. I am indeed, sir, and so, sir, your humble servant.

Sid. Your servant, Mrs. Betty.

Betty. So! I see he believes every word I say; that's charming—I will do her business for her I am resolved. [*Aside.—Exit.*

Sid. What can this ridiculous creature mean—by her dark walk—I see envy is as malignant in a paltry waiting wench, as in the vainest, or the most ambitious, lady of the court. It is always an infallible mark *of the basest nature;* and merit in the lowest, as in the

highest station must feel the shafts of envy's constant agents—falsehood and slander.

Enter SAM.

Sam. Sir, Mr. Egerton, and Miss Constantia, desire to speak with you in the china room.

Sid. Very well, Sam! [*Exit* SAM.] I will not see them—what's to be done?—inform his father of his intended marriage!—no;—that must not be—for the overbearing temper, and ambitious policy of Sir Pertinax, would exceed all bounds of moderation. But this young man must not marry Constantia—I know it will offend him—no matter. It is our duty to offend, when the offence saves the man we love from a precipitate action.—Yes, I must discharge the duty of my function, and a friend, though I am sure to lose the man, whom I intend to serve. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter EGERTON *and* CONSTANTIA.

Con. Mr. Sidney is not here, sir.

Eger. I assure you I left him here, and I begged hat he would stay till I returned.

Con. His prudence, you see, sir, has made him re-

tire, therefore we had better defer the subject till he is present—In the mean time, sir, I hope you will permit me to mention an affair, that has greatly alarmed, and perplexed me. I suppose you guess what it is.

Eger. I do not, upon my word!

Con. That's a little strange—You know, sir, that you and Mr. Sidney did me the honour of breakfasting with me this morning in my little study.

Eger. We had that happiness, madam!

Con. Just after you left me, upon my opening my book of accompts, which lay in the drawer of the reading desk, to my great surprise—I there found this case of jewels, containing a most elegant pair of ear-rings, a necklace of great value, and two bank bills in this pocket-book, the mystery of which, sir, I presume you can explain.

Eger. I can.

Con. They were of your conveying, then?

Eger. They were, madam.

Con. I assure you they startled and alarmed me.

Eger. I hope it was a kind alarm, such as blushing virtue feels, when with her hand she gives her heart, —and last consent.

Con. It was not, indeed, sir.

Eger. Do not say so, Constantia—come, be kind at once; my peace and worldly bliss depend upon this moment.

Con. What would you have me do?

Eger. What love and virtue dictate?

Con. Oh! sir—experience but too severely proves that such unequal matches as ours never produced aught but contempt and anger in parents, censure from the world—and a long train of sorrow and repentance in the wretched parties, which is but too often entailed upon their hapless issue.

Eger. But that, Constantia, cannot be our condition; for my fortune is independent and ample, equal to

luxury, and splendid folly; I have the right to chuse the partner of my heart.

Con. But I have not, sir.—I am a dependent on my lady—a poor, forsaken, helpless, orphan. Your benevolent mother found me, took me to her bosom, and there supplied my parental loss with every tender care, indulgent dalliance, and with all the sweet persuasion that maternal fondness, religious precept, polished manners, and hourly example, could administer, she fostered me [*Weeps.*] And shall I now turn viper, and with black ingratitude sting the tender heart, that thus has cherished me? Shall I seduce her house's heir, and kill her peace? No—though I loved to the mad extreme of female fondness; though every worldly bliss, that woman's vanity, or, man's ambition could desire, followed the indulgence of my love, and all the contempt and misery of this life the denial of that indulgence, I would discharge my duty to my benefactress, my earthly guardian, my more than parent.

Eger. My dear Constantia. Your prudence, your gratitude, and the cruel virtue of your self-denial, do but increase my love, my admiration, and my misery.

Con. Sir, I must beg you will give me leave to return these bills and jewels.

Eger. Pray do not mention them; sure my kindness and esteem may be indulged, so far, without suspicion or reproach—I beg you will accept of them;—nay, I insist—

Con. I have done, sir,—my station here is to obey—I know they are the gifts of a virtuous mind, and mine shall convert them to the tenderest and most grateful use.

Eger. Hark! I hear a carriage—It is my father! dear girl, compose yourself,—I will consult Sidney and my lady, by their judgment we will be directed;—will that satisfy you?

Con. I can have no will but my lady's; with your

catch a luock, or a smile fra the great mon; which they meet with an amicable risibility of aspect—a modest cadence of body—and a conciliating co-operation of the whole mon;—which—expresses an officious promptitude for his service, and indicates—that they luock upon themselves as the suppliant appendages of his power, and the inlisted Swiss of his poleetical fortune—this, sir, is what ye aught to do—and this, sir, is what I never once omitted for these five and tharty years,—let wha would be meenister.

Eger. [*Aside.*] Contemptible!

Sir Pert. What is that ye mutter, sir!

Eger. Only a slight reflection, sir; and not relative to you.

Sir Pert. Sir, your absenting yourself fra the levee at this juncture is suspeecious—it is luocked upon as a kind of disaffection; and aw your countrymen are highly offended with yeer conduct; for, sir, they do not luock upon ye, as a friend, or a weel wisher either to Scotland or Scotchmen.

Eger. Then, sir, they wrong me, I assure you; but pray, sir, in what particular can I be charged either with coldness, or offence to my country?

Sir Pert. Why, sir, ever since your mother's unc Sir Stanley Egerton, left ye this three thousand pour a year, and that ye have, in compliance with will, taken up the name of Egerton, they think ye grown proud,—that ye have estranged yoursal the Macsycophants—have associated with yeer ther's family—with the opposeetion—and with t again I must tell you, wha do not wish weel till land—besides, sir, in a conversation the other de ter dinner, at yeer cousin, Campbell Mac Kenzi fore a whole table full of yeer ain relations, not publicly wish—a total extinguishment of a —and of aw national distinctions whatever, *to the three* kingdoms. And ye blockhead—v *a prudent wish,*—before sae many of yeer ain

men, and be damned to ye? Or, was it a filial language to hold before me?

Eger. Sir, with your pardon—I cannot think it unfilial, or imprudent; I own I do wish—most ardently wish, for a total extinction of all parties—particularly that of English, Irish, and Scotch might never more be brought into contest, or competition; unless, like loving brothers, in generous emulation for one common cause.

Sir Pert. How, sir; do ye persist?—what, would ye banish aw party—and aw distinction betwext English, Irish, and your ain countrymen?

Eger. I would, sir.

Sir Pert. Then damme, sir—ye are nae true Scot. Ay, sir; ye may luock as angry as ye wull; but again I say—ye are nae true Scot.

Eger. Your pardon, sir, I think he is the true Scot, and the true citizen, who wishes equal justice to the merit and demerit of every subject of Great Britain.—Amongst whom, sir, I know but of two distinctions.

Sir Pert. Weel, sir, and what are those? what are those? [*Impatiently.*

Eger. The knave, and——and the honest man.

Sir Pert. Pshaw! nonsense!

Eger. And he who makes any other—let him be of the north, or of the south, of the east, or of the west, in place, or out of place—is an enemy to the whole, and to the virtues of humanity.

Sir Pert. Ay, sir! this is your brother's impudent doctrine—for the which I have banished him for ever fra my presence, my heart, and my fortune—sir I will have nae son of mine, because truly he has been educate in an English university, presume to speak against his native land—or against my principles. Sir, Scotsmen—Scotsmen, sir,—wherever they meet throughout the globe—should unite and stick together as it were, in a poleetical phalanx. However—nae mair of that now, I will talk at large till

ye, about that business anon; in the mean time, sir, notwithstanding your contempt of my advice, and your disobedience till my commands, I wool convince ye of my paternal attention till your welfare, by my management with this voluptuary—this Lord Lumbercourt, whose daughter ye are to marry:—ye ken, sir, that the fellow has been my patron above these five and tharty years.

Eger. True, sir.

Sir Pert. Vary weel—and now, sir, you see by his prodigality, he is become my dependent; and accordingly I have made my bargain with him—the deel a bawbee he has in the world but what comes through these clutches; for his whole estate, which has three impleecit boroughs upon it—mark—is now in my custody at nurse; the which estate, on my paying off his debts, and allowing him a life rent of seven thousand per annum, is to be made over till me for my life; and at my death is to descend till ye and yeer issue—the peerage of Lumbercourt, ye ken, will follow of course—so, sir, you see there are three impleecit boroughs, the whole patrimony of Lumbercourt, and a peerage at one slap—why it is a stroke—a hit—a hit—a capital hit, mon.—Zounds! sir, a man may live a century, and not make sic another hit again!

Eger. It is a very advantageous bargain, no doubt, sir; but what will my lord's family say to it.

Sir Pert. Why, mon, he cares not if his family were aw at the deel, so his luxury be but gratified—only let him have his race-horse, till feed his vanity; his polite blacklegs, to advise him in his matches on the turf, cards, and tennis; his harridan, till drink drams wee him, scrat his face, and burn his periwig, when she is in her maudlin hysterics—the fellow has aw that he wants, and aw that he wishes, in this world——

Enter TOMLINS.

Tomlins. Lady Rodolpha, is come, sir.

Sir Pert. And my lord?

Tomlins. No, sir, he is about a mile behind, the servant says.

Sir Pert. Let me know, the instant he arrives.

Tomlins. I shall, sir. [*Exit* TOMLINS.

Sir Pert. Step ye oot, Charles, and receive Lady Rodolpha. And I desire sir, ye wool treat her with ass much respect and gallantry ass possible—for my lord has hinted that ye have been very remiss ass a lover. So go, go, and receive her.

Eger. I shall, sir.

Sir Pert. Vary weel—vary weel—a gude lad—go, go, and receive her, ass a lover should. [*Exit* EGERTON.] Hah! I must keep a tight hand upon this fallow, I see: a fine time o'day indeed for a blockhead to turn patriot—when the character is exploded, marked, proscribed; why the common people, the very vulgar, have found out the jest—and laugh at a patriot now a days, just as they do at a conjuror, a magician, or any other impostor in society.

Enter TOMLINS *and* LORD LUMBERCOURT.

Tomlins. Lord Lumbercourt. [*Exit* TOMLINS.

Lord L. Sir Pertinax, I kiss your hand.

Sir Pert. Your lordship's most devoted—I rejoice to see you!

Lord L. You stole a march upon me, this morning! —gave me the slip, Mac; though I never wanted your assistance more in my life. I thought you would have called upon me.

Sir Pert. My dear lord, I beg ten millions of pardons, for leaving town before you—but ye ken that your lordship at dinner yesterday settled that we should meet this morning at the levee?

Lord L. That I acknowledge, Mac—I did promise to be there, I own—but——

Sir Pert. You did, indeed—and accordingly I was *at the levee: and waited* there till every mortal was

gone, and seeing you did na come, I concluded, that your lordship was gone before.

Lord L. To confess the truth, my dear Mac, that old sinner, Lord Freakish, General Jolley, Sir Anthony Soaker, and two or three more of that set—laid hold of me last night at the opera; and as the general says —I believe, by the intelligence of my head this morning—ha! ha! ha! we drank deep ere we departed —ha! ha! ha! and—

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! nay, if you were with that party, my lord, I don't wonder at not seeing your lordship at the levee!

Lord L. The truth is, Sir Pertinax, my fellow let me sleep too long for the levee. But I wish I had seen you before you left town—I wanted you dreadfully.

Sir Pert. I am heartily sorry, that I was not in the way, but on what account, my lord, did you want me?

Lord L. Ha! ha! ha! a cursed awkward affair—and—ha! ha! yet I cannot help laughing at it, neither; though it vexed me confoundedly.

Sir Pert. Vexed you, my lord—I wish I had been wi' ye then; but for Heaven's sake, my lord, what was it that could possibly vex your lordship?

Lord L. Why, that impudent, teasing, dunning rascal, Mahogany, my upholsterer—you know the fellow?

Sir Pert. Perfectly, my lord.

Lord L. The impudent scoundrel has sued me up to some infernal kind of a—something or other, in the law, which I think they call an execution!

Sir Pert. The rascal!

Lord L. Upon which, sir, the fellow—ha! ha! ha! I cannot help laughing at it—by way of asking pardon, ha! ha! ha! had the modesty to wait on me two or three days ago—to inform my *honour*, ha! ha! as he was pleased to dignify me—that the execution was now ready to be put in force against my *honour*, ha! ha! ha!—but that, out of respect to my *honour*, as he *had taken a great deal of my honour's* money, he would

not suffer his lawyer to serve it—till he had first informed my *honour*—because he was not willing to affront my *honour*! ha! ha! ha!—a son of a whore!

Sir Pert. I never heard of so impudent a dog.

Lord L. Now, my dear Mac! ha! ha! as the scoundrel's apology was so very satisfactory, and his information so very agreeable to my honour—I told him, that in honour I could not do less than to order his honour to be paid immediately.

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha!—vary weel—ye were as complaisant ass the scoundrel, till the full, I think, my lord.

Lord L. Ha! ha! ha! to the full; but you shall hear—you shall hear, Mac—so, sir, with great composure, seeing a smart oaken cudgel, that stood very handily in a corner of my dressing room—I ordered two of my fellows to hold the rascal, and another to take the cudgel, and return the scoundrel's civility with a good drubbing, as long as the stick lasted!

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! admirable! as gude a stroke of humour, as ever I heard of—and did they drub him soundly, my lord?

Lord L. Oh! most liberally, ha! ha! ha! most liberally; and there, I thought the affair would have rested, till I should think proper to pay the scoundrel—but this morning, sir, just as I was stepping into my chaise—my servants all about me—a fellow, called a tipstaff, stepped up, and begged the favour of my footman, who thrashed the upholsterer, and the two that held him, to go along with him upon a little business to my Lord Chief Justice.

Sir Pert. The devil!

Lord L. And at the same instant I, in my turn, was accosted by two other very civil scoundrels, who, with a most insolent politeness, begged my pardon, and informed me, that I must not go into my own chaise!

Sir Pert. How, my lord! not intil your ain carriage!

Lord L. No, sir—for that they, by order of the sheriff, must seize it, at the suit of a gentleman—one Mr. Mahogany, an upholsterer.

Sir Pert. An impudent villain!

Lord L. It is all true, I assure you; so you see, my dear Mac, what a damned country this is to live in, where noblemen are obliged to pay their debts, just like merchants, coblers, peasants, or mechanics—Is not that a scandal, dear Mac, to a nation?

Sir Pert. My lord, it is not only a scandal, but a national grievance.

Lord L. Sir, there is not another nation in the world that has such a grievance to complain of. But, Mac—besides the chaise—this Mahogany scoundrel has seized upon the house too, that I furnished for the girl I took from the Opera.

Sir Pert. I never heard of sic an a scoundrel!

Lord L. Ay, but what concerns me most, I am afraid, my dear Mac, that the villain will send down to Newmarket, and seize my string of horses.

Sir Pert. Your string of horses! We must prevent that, at all events:—that would be such a disgrace, I will despatch an express to town directly, to put a stop till the scoundrel's proceedings.

Lord L. Pr'ythee do, my dear Sir Pertinax.

Sir Pert. Oh! it shall be done, my lord.

Lord L. Thou art an honest fellow, Sir Pertinax, upon honour.

Sir Pert. Oh, my lord; 'tis my duty to oblige yeer lordship to the very utmost stretch of my abeelity?

Enter TOMLINS.

Tomlins. Colonel Toper presents his compliments to you, sir, and having no family down with him in the country—he and Captain Hardbottle, if not inconvenient, will do themselves the honour of taking a family dinner with you.

Sir Pert. They are two of our militia officers: does your lordship know them?

Lord L. By sight only.

Sir Pert. I am afraid, my lord, they will interrupt our business.

Lord L. Ha! ha! not at all—not at all—ha! ha! ha! I should like to be acquainted with Toper, they say he is a fine jolly fellow!

Sir Pert. Oh! very jolly, and very clever. He and the captain, my lord, are reckoned two of the hardest drinkers in the county.

Lord L. Ha! ha! ha! so I have heard—let us have them by all means, Mac; they will enliven the scene—how far are they from you?

Sir Pert. Just across the meadows—not half a mile, my lord—a step—a step.

Lord L. Oh, let us have the jolly dogs, by all means!

Sir Pert. My compliments, I shall be proud of their company. [*Exit* TOMLINS.] Guif ye please, my lord, we wull gang and chat a bit wee the women. I have not seen Lady Rodolpha since she returned fra the Bath, I long to have a little news from her, aboot the company there.

Lord L. O! she'll give you an account of them, I'll warrant you. [*A very loud laugh without.*] Here the hairbrain comes! it must be her, by the noise.

Lady Rod. [*Without.*] Allons! gude folks—follow me—sans ceremonie!

Enter LADY RODOLPHA, LADY MACSYCOPHANT, EGERTON, *and* SIDNEY.

Lady Rod. [*Running up to* SIR PERTINAX.] Sir Pertinax,—your most devoted—most obsequious, and most obedient vassal. [*Courtesies very low.*

Sir Pert. Lady Rodolpha—down till the ground my congratulations, duty, and affection, sincerely attend *your ladyship.* [*Bowing ridiculously low.*

Lady Rod. Oh! Sir Pertinax—your humeelity is most sublimely complaisant—at present unanswerable—but, sir, I shall intensely study to return it, [*Courtesies very low.*] fafty fold.

Sir Pert. Weel, madam, ha!—you luock gaily—weel and how—how is your ladyship, after your jaunt till the Bath?

Lady Rod. Never better, Sir Pertinax—as well as youth, health, riotous spirits, and a careless, happy heart can make me.

Sir Pert. I am mighty glad till hear it, my lady?

Lord L. Ay, ay,—Rodolpha is always in spirits, Sir Pertinax "*Vive la bagatelle,*" is the philosophy of our family, ha!—Rodolpha,—ha!

Lady Rod. Traith is it, my lord: and upon honour, I am determined it never shall be changed, by my consent—weel I vow—ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! Vive la bagatelle would be a most brilliant motto for the chariot of a belle of fashion—what say ye till my fancy, Lady Macsycophant?

Lady Mac. It would have novelty at least to recommend it, madam.

Lady Rod. Which of aw charms is the most delightful that can accompany wit, taste, love, or, friendship—for novelty, I take to be the true je ne scai quoi, of all worldly bliss. Cousin Egerton, should not you like to have a wife with Vive la bagatelle upon her wedding chariot?

Eger. Oh! certainly, madam.

Lady Rod. Yes—I think it would be quite out of the common, and singularly ailegant.

Eger. Indisputably, madam—for, as a motto is a word to the wise; or, rather a broad hint to the whole world, of a person's taste and principles, Vive la bagatelle—would be most expressive, at first sight, of your ladyship's characteristic!

Lady Rod. Oh, Maister Egerton! You touch my *very heart, wi your* approbation—ha! ha! ha! that is

the vary spirit of my intention, the instant I commence bride. Well, I am immensely proud, that my fancy has the approbation of so sound an understanding—so sublime a genius—and so polished, nay, so exquisite, a taste, as that of the all accomplished Mr. Egerton.

Sir Pert. But, Lady Rodolpha, I wish till ask your ladyship some questions aboot the company at Bath; they say ye had aw the world there.

Lady Rod. O, yes;—there was a vary grate mob indeed; but vary little company: aw canaille—except our ain party; the place was quite crooded wi your little purse-prood mechanics—an odd kind of queer luocking animals, that ha started intil fortunes fra lottery tickets, rich prizes at sea, gambling in Change Alley, and sic like caprices of fortune, and awaw they aw crood till the Bath, to larn genteelity, and the names, titles, intrigues, and bon mots of us people of fashion—ha! ha! ha!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Lord L. Ha! ha! ha! I know them—I know the things you mean, my dear, extremely well. I have observed them a thousand times; and wondered where the devil they all came from! ha! ha! ha!

Lady Mac. Pray, Lady Rodolpha, what were your diversions at Bath?

Lady Rod. Gude faith, my lady, the company were my diversion—and better nai human follies ever afforded—ha! ha! ha! sic an a maxture—and sic oddities, ha! ha! ha! a perfect galimowfry? ha! ha! ha! Lady Kunigunda Mac Kensie and I used to gang aboot till every part of this human chaos, ha! ha! on purpose till reconnoitre the monsters, and pick up their frivolities, ha! ha! ha! ha!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! why, that must have been a high entertainment till your ladyship!

Lady Rod. Superlative, and inexhaustible, Sir

Pertinax! ha! ha! ha! Madam, we had in yane group a peer and a sharper—a duchess, and a pin maker's wife—a boarding school miss, and her grandmother —a fat parson, a lean general, and a yellow-admiral —ha! ha! all speaking together, and bawling, and fretting, and fuming, and wrangling, and retorting in fierce contention, as if the fame, and the fortune, of aw the parties, were till be the issue of the conflict.

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! Pray, madam, what was the object of their furious contantion?

Lady Rod. Oh! a vary important one, I assure you, Sir Pertinax; of no less consequence, madam, than how an odd trick at whist was lost, or might have been saved!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Rod. In another party, Sir Pertinax, we had what was called, the cabinet council; which was composed of a duke, and a haberdasher; a red hot patriot, and a sneering courtier; a discarded statesman, and his scribbling chaplain; wi a busy, bawling, muckle heeded prerogative lawyer—All of whom were every minute, ready to gang together by the lugs, aboot the in and the oot meenistry, ha! ha! ha!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! weel, that was a droll, motley cabinet, I vow. Vary whimsical, upon honour; but they are aw greet politeecians at Bath, and settle a meenistry there with ass much ease ass they do a tune for a country dance!

Lady Rod. Then, Sir Pertinax, in a retired part of the room—snug—in a bye corner—in close conference, we had a jew, and a beeshop.

Sir Pert. A jew, and a beeshop! ha! ha! a devilish gude connexion that; and pray, my lady, what were they aboot?

Lady Rod. Why, sir, the beeshop was striving to *or vert the jew; while* the jew, by intervals, was slily

picking up intelligence fra the beeshop, aboot the change in the meenistry, in hopes of making a stroke in the stocks.

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! admirable, admirable, I honour the smouse—hah!—it was deevilish clever of him, my lord, deevilish clever.

Lord L. Yes, yes, the fellow kept a sharp look out; I think it was a fair trial of skill on both sides, Mr. Egerton.

Eger. True, my lord, but the jew seems to have been in the fairer way to succeed.

Lord L. Oh! all to nothing, sir; ha! ha! ha! well, child, I like your jew, and your bishop much—it is monstrous clever, let us have the rest of the history, pray, my dear.

Lady Rod. Gude traith, my lord, the sum total is, that there we aw danced, and wrangled, and flattered, and slandered, and gambled, and cheated, and mingled, and jumbled—and wolloped together.

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Lord L. Well, you are a droll girl, Rodolpha, and upon honour, ha! ha! ha!—you have given us as whimsical a sketch, as ever was hit off. What say you, Mr. Sidney.

Sid. Upon my word, my lord, the lady has made me see the whole assembly at Bath, in glaring, pleasing, distinct colours!

Lady R. O, dear, Maister Sidney, your approbation makes me as vain, as a reigning toast at her looking-glass.

Enter TOMLINS.

Tomlins. Colonel Toper and Captain Hardbottle, are come, sir.

Sir Pert. O, vary weel! dinner immediately.

Tomlins. It is ready, sir. [*Exit* TOMLINS.

Sir Pert. My lord, we attend your lordship.

Lord L. Lady Mac, your ladyship's hand, if you please. [*He leads her out.*

Sir Pert. Lady Rodolpha, here is an Arcadian swain, that has a hand at your ladyship's devotion!

Lady Rod. And I, Sir Pertinax, ha, yean at his—[*Gives her Hand to* EGERTON.] there, sir,—as to hearts—ye ken, cousin, they are nae brought into the account o' human dealings now-a-days.

Eger. Oh! madam, they are mere temporary bawbles, especially in courtship; and no more to be depended upon, than the weather—or a lottery ticket.

Lady Rod. Ha! ha! ha! twa excellent seemilies, I vow Mr. Egerton, excellent!—for they illustrate the vagaries, and inconstancy of my dissapated heart, ass exactly—ass if ye had meant till describe it.

[EGERTON *leads her out.*

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! what a vast fund of speerits, and good humour, she has, Maister Sidney?

Sid. A great fund, indeed, Sir Pertinax?

Sir Pert. Hah! by this time to-morrow, Maister Sidney, I hope wee shall ha every thing ready for ye, to put the last helping hand till the earthly happiness o' your friend, and pupil; and then, sir, my cares wull be over for this life; for ass till my other son, I expect nai gude of him; nor should I grieve, were I to see him in his coffin.—But this match—Oh! it wull make me the happiest of aw human beings. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter SIR PERTINAX *and* EGERTON.

Sir Pert. Sir, I wull not hear a word aboot it;—I insist upon it ye are wrong—ye should hai paid your court till my lord, and not ha scrupled swallowing a bumper or twa—or twanty till oblige him!

Eger. Sir, I did drink his toast in a bumper?

Sir Pert. Yas, ye did; but how?—how?—just ass a cross brain takes pheesic, wi wry mouths, and sour faces, whach my lord observed; then, to mend the matter, the moment that he and the colonel got intiH a drunken dispute aboot releegion, ye slily slunged awa.

Eger. I thought, sir, it was time to go, when my lord insisted upon half pint bumpers?

Sir Pert. Sir, that was not levelled at you—but at the colonel, the captain, and the commissioner, in order till try their bottoms; but they aw agreed that ye and I should drink oot o' smaw glasses.

Eger. But, sir, I beg pardon—I did not chuse to drink any more.

Sir Pert. But, sir, I tell you there was necessity for your drinking more; at this particular juncture.

Eger. A necessity! in what respect, sir?

Sir Pert. Why, sir, I have a certain point to carry, independent of the lawyers, with my lord, in this

agreement of your marriage, aboot whach, I am afraid we shall ha a warm crooked squabble—and therefore I wanted your assistance in it.

Eger. But how, sir, could my drinking contribute to assist you in your squabble.

Sir Pert. Yas, sir, it would ha contributed—it might have prevented the squabble.

Eger. How so, sir?

Sir Pert. Why, sir, my lord is prood of ye for a son-in-law, and of your little French songs—your stories, and your bon mots, when ye are in the humour—and guin ye had but staid, and been a leetle jolly, and drank half a score bumpers wi him, till he got a little tipsey, I am sure when we had him i'that tipsey mood—we might ha settled the point amongst ourselves, before the lawyers came—but noow, sir, I dinna ken what will be the consequence.

Eger. But when a man is intoxicated, would that have been a seasonable time to settle business, sir?

Sir Pert. The most seasonable, sir, the most seasonable; for, sir, when my lord is in his cups, his suspeecion and his judgment are baith asleep, and his heart is aw jollity, fun and gude fellowship—you may then mould his consent to any thing, and can there be a happier moment than that for a bargain, or, to settle a dispute wi' a friend? What is it you shrug your shoulders at, sir?

Eger. At my own ignorance, sir: for I understand neither the philosophy, nor the morality of your doctrine.

Sir Pert. I know ye do not, sir:—and what is warse, ye never will understand it, ass ye proceed. In yean word, Charles—I ha' often tauld ye, and noow again I tell ye yeance for aw, that every man should be a man o'the warld, and should understand the doctrine of pleeabeelity; for sir, the manœuvres of pleeabeelity, are ass necessary to rise in the warld, ass *wrangling, and logical* subtlety are to rise at the bar

why ye see, sir, I ha acquired a noble fortune, a princely fortune, and hoow do ye think I ha raised it?

Eger. Doubtless, sir, by your abilities.

Sir Pert. Dootless, sir, ye are a blockhead—nai, sir, I'll tell ye hoow I raised it, sir; I raised it by boowing; by boowing, sir; I naver in my life could stond straight i'th' presence of a great mon; but awways boowed, and boowed, and boowed, as it were by instinct.

Eger. How do you mean, by instinct, sir?

Sir Pert. Hoow do I mean, by instinct—why, sir, I mean by—by—by the instinct of interest, sir, whach is the univarsal instinct of mankind, sir: it is wonderful to think, what a cordial, what an amicable, nay, what an infallible influence, boowing has upon the pride and vanity of human nature; Chairles, answer me sincerely, ha ye a mind till be convinced of the force of my doctrine, by example, and demonstration?

Eger. Certainly, sir.

Sir Pert. Then, sir, as the greatest favour, I can confer upon ye, I wull give ye a short sketch of the stages of my boowing; ass an excitement, and a landmark for ye till boow by, and ass an infallible nostrum, for a mon o'the warld till thrive i'the warld.

Eger. Sir, I shall be proud to profit by your experience.

Sir Pert. Vary weel. [*They both sit down.*] And noow, sir, ye must recall till your thoughts, that your grandfather was a mon, whose penurious income of half pay was the sum total of his fortune; and, sir, aw my proveesion fra him was a modicum of Latin, an expartness of areethmetic, and a short system of worldly counsel, the chief ingredients of which were, a persevering industry, a reegid economy, a smooth tongue, a pliabeelety of temper, and a constant attention till make every mon weel pleased wi himself.

Eger. Very prudent advice, sir.

Sir Pert. Therefore, sir, I lay it before ye—now, sir, wi these materials, I set oot, a rough raw-boned stripling, fra the north, till try my fortune wi them here i'the south; and my first step intill the world, was a beggarly clerkship in Sawney Gordon's compting house, here in th' city of London, whach, you'll say, afforded but a barren sort of a prospect.

Eger. It was not a very fertile one, indeed, sir.

Sir Pert. The revearse, the revearse. Weel, sir, seeing mysel in this unprofitable situation, I reflected deeply, I cast aboot my thoughts, and concluded that a matrimonial adventure, prudently conducted, would be the readiest gait I could gang for the beetering of my condection, and accordingly, I set aboot it—noow, sir, in this pursuit—beauty—beauty, ah! beauty often struck mine e'en, and played aboot my heart, and fluttered, and beet, and knocked, and knocked, but the deel an entrance I ever let it get—for I observed that beauty is generally, a prood, vain, saucy, expensive sort of a commodity.

Eger. Very justly observed, sir.

Sir Pert. And therefore, sir, I left it to prodigals and coxcombs, that could afford till pay for it, and in its stead, sir,—mark—I loouked oot for an ancient, weel jointured, superannuated dowager:—a consumptive, toothless, phtisicky, wealthy widow—or, a shreeveled, cadaverous, neglected piece of deformity, i'th' shape of an ezard, or an ampersi-and—or in short, any thing, any thing, that had the siller, the siller; for that was the north star of my affection—do ye take me, sir? Was na that right?

Eger. O doubtless, doubtless, sir.

Sir Pert. Noow, sir; where do ye think I ganged to louck for this woman, wi' th' siller—nai, till court—nai, till play-houses, or assemblies—nai, sir, I ganged till the kirk, till the anabaptists, independent, Bradleonian, Muggletonian meetings; till the morning, and *evening service* of churches, and chapels of ease; and

till the midnight, melting, conciliating, love-feasts of the methodists—and there at last, sir, I fell upon an old, rich, sour, slighted, antiquated musty maiden, that louked—ha! ha! ha! she loucked just like a skeleton, in a surgeon's glass-case—noow, sir, this meeserable object was releegiously angry wi hersel, and aw the warld, had nai comfort but in a supernatural releegious, enthusiastic, deleerium; ha! ha! ha! sir, she was mad—mad ass a bedlamite.

Eger. Not improbable sir, there are numbers of poor creatures in the same enthusiastic condition.

Sir Pert. Oh! numbers, numbers; now, sir, this poor, cracked, crazy creature, used to sing, and sigh, and groan, and weep, and wail, and gnash her teeth, constantly, morning, and evening, at the tabernacle. And ass soon ass I found she had the siller, aha! gude traith, I plumped me doon upo', down close by her, cheek by jole, and sung, and sighed, and groaned, as vehemently ass she could do for the life of her; ay, and turned up the whites of my e'en, till the strings awmost cracked again: I watched her attentively, handed her till her chair; waited on her hame; got most releegiously intimate wi' her in a week; married her in a fortnight; buried her in a month, touched the siller; and wi a deep suit of mourning, a sorrowful veesage, and a joyful heart, I began the warld again; and this, sir, was the first effectual boow, I ever made till the vanity of human nature; noow, sir, do ye understand this doctrine?

Eger. Perfectly well, sir.

Sir Pert. My next boow, sir, was till your ane mother, whom I ran away wi frai the boarding school, by the interest of whose family I got a gude smart place i'th' treasury; and, sir, my vary next step was intill Parliament, the whach I entered wi as ardent and ass determined an ambeetion, ass ever ageetated the heart o'Cæsar himsel. Sir, I boowed, and watched, and *attended, and* dangled upo' the then great mon,

till I got intill the vary bowels of his confidence—hah! got my snack of the clothing, the foraging, the contracts, the lottery tickets, and aw the poleetical bonuses; till at length, sir, I became a much wealthier mon than one half of the golden calves, I had been so long a boowing too. [*He rises*, EGERTON *rises too.*] And was na that boowing to some purpose, sir, ha?

Eger. It was, indeed, sir.

Sir P. But are ye convinced of the gude effects and of the uteelity of boowing?

Eger. Thoroughly, sir, thoroughly.

Sir Pert. Sir, it is infallible—but, Chairles, ah! while I was thus boowing, and raising this princely fortune, ah! I met many heart sores, and disappointments, fra the want of leeterature, ailoquence, and other popular abeelities; sir, guin I could but ha spoken i'th' house, I should ha' done the deed in half the time; but the instant I opened my mouth, there, they aw fell a laughing at me: aw which defeeciencies, sir, I determin'd at any expense till have supplied by the polish'd education of a son, who I hop'd would yean day raise the house of Macsycophant till the highest pinnacle of ministeerial ambeetion; this, sir, is my plan: I ha done my part of it. Nature has done hers, ye are ailoquant, ye are popular; aw parties like ye; and noow, sir, it only remains for ye to be directed—completion follows.

Eger. Your liberality, sir, in my education, and the judicious choice you made of the worthy gentleman, to whose virtue and abilities you entrusted me, are obligations I ever shall remember with the deepest filial gratitude.

Sir. P. Vary weel, sir—vary weel, but, Chairles, ha' ye had any conversation yet wi Lady Rodolpha, aboot the day of yeer marriage, yeer leeveries, yeer equipage, or yeer establishment?

Eger. Not yet, sir.

Sir Pert. Pah! why there again now, there again, ye are wrong; vary wrong.

Eger. Sir, we have not had an opportunity.

Sir Pert. Why, Chairles, ye are very tardy in this business.

Lord Lumbercourt. [*Singing without.*] *What have we with day to do? &c.*

Sir Pert. Oh! here comes my lord!

Lord Lumbercourt. [*Singing without.*] *Sons of care, 'twas made for you.*

Enter LORD LUMBERCOURT, *drinking a Dish of Coffee,* TOMLINS *waiting, with a Salver in his Hand.*

Sons of care, 'twas made for you.

Very good coffee, indeed, Mr. Tomlins.

Sons of care, 'twas made for you.

Here, Mr. Tomlins. [*Gives him the Cup.*

Tomlins. Will your lordship please to have another dish?

Lord L. No more, Mr. Tomlins. [*Exit* TOMLINS.] Well, my host of the Scotch pints! we have had warm work.

Sir Pert. Yes, you pushed the bottle aboot, my lord, wi the joy and veegour of a bacchanal.

Lord L. That I did, my dear Mac—no loss of time with me—I have but three motions, old boy, charge! —toast!—fire!—and off we go—ha! ha! ha! that's my exercise.

Sir Pert. And fine warm exercise it is my lord, especially with the half-pint glass.

Lord L. It does execution point blank—ay, ay, none of your pimping acorn glasses for me, but your manly, old English half pint bumpers, my dear—Zounds, sir! they try a fellow's stamina at once: But where's Egerton?

Sir Pert. Just at hand, my lord; there he stonds, luocking at your lordship's picture.

Lord L. My dear Egerton.

Eger. Your lordship's most obedient.

Lord L. I beg your pardon, I did not see you—I am sorry you left us so soon after dinner, had you staid, you would have been highly entertained, I have made such examples of the commissioner, the captain, and the colonel!

Eger. So I understand, my lord.

Lord L. But, Egerton, I have slipped from the company, for a few moments, on purpose to have a little chat with you. Rodolpha tells me she fancies there is a kind of a demur on your side, about your marriage with her.

Sir Pert. A demur, hoow so, my lord?

Lord L. Why, as I was drinking my coffee with the women, just now, I desired they would fix the wedding night, and the etiquette of the ceremony; upon which the girl burst into a loud laugh, telling me she supposed, I was joking, for that Mr. Egerton had never yet given her a single glance, or hint upon the subject.

Sir Pert. My lord, I have been just this vary instant talking to him aboot his shyness to the lady.

Enter TOMLINS.

Tomlins. Counsellor Plausible is come, sir, and Sergeant Eitherside.

Sir Pert. Why, then we can settle this business this vary evening, my lord.

Lord L. As well as in seven years—and to make the way as short as possible, pray, Mr. Tomlins, present your master's compliments and mine to Lady Rodolpha, and let her ladyship know we wish to speak to her directly. [*Exit* TOMLINS.] He shall attack her this instant, Sir Pertinax.

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! ay! that's axcellent, this is doing business effectually, my lord!

Lord L. Oh! I will pit them in a moment, Sir *Pertinax—that will* bring them into the heat of the

action at once; and save a deal of awkwardness on both sides—Oh, here your dulcinea comes, sir!

Enter LADY RODOLPHA.

Lady Rod. Weel, Sir Pertinax, I attend your commands, and yours my paternal lord. [*She courtesies.*

Lord L. Why then, my filial lady, we are to inform you, that the commission for your ladyship, and this enamoured cavalier, commanding you jointly, and inseparably to serve your country, in the honourable and forlorn hope of matrimony, is to be signed this very evening.

Lady Rod. This evening, my lord!

Lord L. This evening, my lady: come, Sir Pertinax, let us leave them to settle their liveries, wedding suits, carriages, and all their amorous equipage for the nuptial camp.

Sir Pert. Ha! ha! ha! axcellent! weel, I voow, my lord, ye are a great officer: this is as gude a manœuvre to bring on a rapid engagement, as the ablest general of them aw could ha started.

Lord L. Ay, ay; leave them together, they'll soon come to a right understanding, I warrant you, or the needle and the loadstone have lost their sympathy.

Eger. [*Aside.*] What a dilemma am I in!

[*Exeunt* LORD LUMBERCOURT *and* SIR PERTINAX.

Lady Rod. Why, this is downright tyranny—it has quite damped my spirits, and my betrothed yonder, seems planet-struck too, I think.

Eger. [*Aside.*] A whimsical situation mine!

Lady Rod. [*Aside.*] Ha! ha! ha! methinks we luock, like a couple of cawtious geenerals, that are obliged till take the field, but neither of us seems willing to come till action.

Eger. [*Aside.*] I protest, I know not how to address her.

Lady Rod. He wull nai advance, I see—what am

I to do i' this affair? gude traith, I will even do, as I suppose many brave heroes ha done before me; clap a gude face upo' the matter, and so conceal an aching heart, under a swaggering countenance. [*Aside.*] Sir, sir, ass we ha, by the commands of our gude fathers—a business of some little consequence till transact—I hope ye will excuse my taking the leeberty of recommending a chair till ye.

[*Courtesies very low.*

Eger. [*Greatly embarrassed.*] Madam, I beg your pardon. [*Hands her a Chair, then one for himself.*] Please to sit, madam. [*They sit down.*

Lady Rod. [*Aside.*] Aha! he's resolved not to come too near till me, I think.

Eger. [*Aside.*] A pleasant interview—hem! hem!

Lady Rod. [*Aside.*] Hem! hem! [*Mimics him.*] He will not open the congress, I see; then I will. [*Very loud.*] Come, sir, whan will ye begin.

Eger. [*Starts.*] Begin! what, madam?

Lady Rod. To make love till me.

Eger. Love, madam?

Lady Rod. Ay, love, sir; why, you ha never said a word till me yet upo' the subject; nor cast a single glance at me, nor brought forth one tender sigh, nor even yeance secretly squeezed my loof. Now, sir, thof oor fathers are so tyrannical, ass to dispose of us merely for their ain interests, without a single thought of oor hearts or affections; yet sir, I hope ye ha mair humanity than to think of wedding me, without first admeenistering some o'th' preleeminaries usual on those occasions?

Eger. Madam, I own your reproach is just: I shall therefore no longer disguise my sentiments, but fairly let you know my heart—

Lady Rod. Ah! ye are right, ye are right, cousin. Honourably and affectionately right—noow that is what I like of aw things in my swain—ay, ay, cou*sin, open your heart* frankly till me, ass a true lover

should; but sit ye doown, sit ye doown again, I shall return your frankness, and your passion cousin, wi a melting tenderness, equal to the amorous enthusiasm of an ancient heroine.

Eger. Madam, if you will hear me—

Lady Rod. But remember ye must begin yeer address wi fervency, and a most rapturous vehemence; for ye are to conseeder, cousin, that oor match is na till arise, fra the union of hearts, and a long decorum of ceremonious courtship, but is instantly till start at yeance, out of necessity, or mere accident, ha! ha! ha! just like a match in an ancient romance, where ye ken, cousin, the knight and the damsel are mutually smitten, and dying for each other at first sight; or by an amorous sympathy, before they exchange a single glance.

Eger. Dear madam, you entirely mistake.

Lady Rod. So noow, cousin, wi the true romance enthusiasm, ye are till suppose me the lady o'th' enchanted castle, and ye—ha! ha! ha! ye are to be the knight o' the sorrowful countenance, ha! ha! ha! d, upon honour, ye touck the character admirably, ! ha!

Eger. Trifling creature!

Lady Rod. Nay, nay, nay, cousin, guin ye do na beat yeance, the lady o'the enchanted castle wull ish in a twankling.

ger. [*Rises.*] Lady Rodolpha, I know your talent aillery well; but at present, in my case, there is id of cruelty in it.

dy Rod. Raillery! upon my honour, cousin, ye ke me quite and clean. I am serious; vary se- ; ay, and I have cause till be serious; ay, and ad intill the bargain [*Rises.*] nay, I wull submit se even till yoursel—can any poor lassie be in lamentable condeetion [*Whining.*] than to be ur hundred *miles by* the commands of a posi- *admother till marry* a man, who I find has

na mair affection for me, than if I had been his wife these seven years.

Eger. Madam, I am extremely sorry.

Lady Rod. But it is vary weel, cousin—vary weel ——I see your aversion plain enough—and sir, I must tell ye fairly, ye are the ainly mon that ever slighted my person, or that drew tears fra these e'en; but it's vary weel [*Cries.*] I will return till Scotland to-morrow morning, and let my grandmother know hoow I have been affronted by your slights, your contempts, and your aversions.

Eger. If you are serious, madam, your distress gives me a deep concern: but affection is not in our power; and when you know that my heart is irrecoverably given to another woman, I think your understanding, and good nature, will not only pardon my past coldness and neglect of you, but forgive me when I tell you, I never can have that honour which is intended me, by a connexion with your ladyship.

Lady Rod. [*Starting up.*] How, sir! are ye serious?

Eger. Madam, I am too deeply interested, both as a man of honour and a lover, to act otherwise with you on so tender a subject.

Lady Rod. And so, ye persast in slighting me?

Eger. I beg your pardon, but I must be explicit—and at once declare, that I never can give my hand, where I cannot give my heart.

Lady Rod. Why then, sir, I must tell you, that your declaration is sic an affront, ass na woman o' speerit ought to bear, and here I make a solemn voow never till pardon it—but on yean condeetion.

Eger. If that condition be in my power, madam—

Lady Rod. Sir, it is i' your poower.

Eger. Then, madam, you may command me.

Lady Rod. Why, then, sir, the condeetion is this: ye must here gie me your honour, that na impor*tunity, command*, or menace o' your faither—in fine *that na consideration* whatever, shall induce you to

take *me* Rodolpha Lumbercourt, till be your wedded wife.

Eger. Madam! I most solemnly promise, I never will.

Lady Rod. And I, sir, in my turn, most solemnly, and sincerely thank ye, for your resolution, [*Courtesies.*] and your agreeable aversion, ha! ha! ha! for ye ha made me as happy, as a poour wretch, reprieved in the vary instant of intended execution.

Eger. Pray, madam, how am I to understand all this?

Lady Rod. Sir, your frankness and sincerity demand the same behaviour on my side. Therefore, without farther disguise, or ambiguity, know, sir, that I myself am ass deeply smitten wi a certain swain, ass I understand ye are wi yeer Constantia.

Eger. Indeed, madam!

Lady Rod. Oh, sir, notwithstanding aw my show of mirth, and courage, here I stand, ass errant a trembling Thisbe, ass ever sighed, or mourned for her Peeramus—and, sir, aw my extravagance, levity, and redeeculous behaviour in your presence, noow, and ever since your faither prevailed on mine to consent till this match, has been a premeditated scheme, to provoke your gravity and gude sense intill a cordial disgust, and a positive refusal.

Eger. But with your leave, madam, if I may presume so far—pray who is your lover?

Lady Rod. Why, in that too, I shall surprise you perhaps more than ever. In the first place, he is a beggar, and in disgrace wi an unforgiving faither, and in the next place, sir—he is [*Courtesies.*] your ain brother.

Eger. Is it possible?

Lady Rod. A most amorous truth, sir—that is—ass far ass a woman can answer for her ain heart. So ye see, cousin Chairles, thoff I could na mingle affections wi ye, I ha *na ganged oot* of the family.

Eger. Madam, give me leave to congratulate myself, upon your affection—you couldn't have placed it on a worthier object; and whatever is to be our chance in this lottery of our parents, be assured that my fortune shall be devoted to your happiness, and his.

Lady Rod. Generous indeed, cousin, but not a whit nobler, I assure you, than your brother, Sandy, believes of you; and pray credit me, sir, that we shall both remember it, while the heart feels, or memory retains a sense of gratitude; but now, sir: let me ask one question—pray, how is your mother affected in this business?

Eger. She knows of my passion, and will, I am sure, be a friend to the common cause.

Lady Rod. Ah! that is lucky, vary lucky—Our first step must be to take her advice upon our conduct, so as till keep our faithers in the dark, till we can hit off some measure, that wull wind them aboot till our ain purpose, and till the common interest of our ain passions.

Eger. You are very right, madam; for should my father suspect my brother's affection for your ladyship, or mine for Constantia, there is no guessing what would be the consequence; his whole happiness depends upon this bargain with my lord; for it gives him the possession of three boroughs, and those madam, are much dearer to him than the happiness of his children: I am sorry to say it, but to gratify his political rage, he would sacrifice every social tie that is dear to friend or family. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter SIR PERTINAX *and* COUNSELLOR PLAUSIBLE.

Sir Pert. No, no; come away, Counsellor Plausible—come away, I say; let them chew upon it—let them chew upon it.—Why, Counsellor, did ye ever hear so impertinent, so meddling, and so obstinate a blockhead, ass that Sergeant Eitherside? confound the fallow, he has put me oot of aw temper!

Plau. He is very positive, indeed, Sir Pertinax, and no doubt was intemperate and rude; but, Sir Pertinax, I would not break off the match, notwithstanding: for certainly, even without the boroughs, it is an advantageous bargain, both to you and your son.

Sir Pert. But, Plausible, do you think I wull give up the nomination till three boroughs? why, I would rather give him twanty, nay tharty thousand pounds in any other part o'th' bargain—especially at this juncture, when votes are likely to become so valuable—why, mon, if a certain affair comes on, they'll rise above five hundred per cent.

Plau. No doubt they will, Sir Pertinax—but what shall we do in this case? for Mr. Sergeant insists that you positively agreed to my lord's having the nomination to the three boroughs during his own life.

Sir Pert. Why yes, in the first sketch of the agree-

ment, I believe, I did consent; but at that time mon, my lord's affairs did not appear to be half so desperate, ass I noow find they turn oot. Sir, he must acquiesce in whatever I demand, for I ha gotten him intill sic an hobble, that he canna exist without me.

Plau. No doubt, Sir Pertinax, you have him absolutely in your power.

Sir Pert. Vary weel; and ought not a mon till make his vantage of it?

Plau. No doubt you ought, no manner of doubt; but, Sir Pertinax, there is a secret spring in this business, that you do not seem to perceive, and which, I am afraid, governs the whole matter respecting these boroughs.

Sir Pert. What spring do ye mean, Counsellor?

Plau. Why, this. I have some reason to think that my lord is tied down by some means, or other, to bring Sergeant Eitherside in, the very first vacancy, for one of those boroughs—now that, I believe, is the sole motive, why the sergeant is so very strenuous that my lord should keep the boroughs in his own power, fearing that you might reject him for some man of your own.

Sir Pert. Oh! my dear Plausible, ye are clever—yes, vary clever—ye ha hit upo' the vary string that has made aw this discord—O! I see it—I see it noow; but haud, haud—bide a wee bit—a wee bit, mon—I ha a thought come intill my head—yes—I think noow, Plausible, wi a little twist in oor negociation, that the vary string, properly tuned, may be still made to produce the very harmony we wish for—ya—yas I ha it—this sergeant, I see, understands business, and if I am not mistaken, knows hoow till take a hint.

Plau. Oh! nobody better, Sir Pertinax, nobody better.

Sir Pert. Why, then, Plausible, the short road is awways the best wi sic a man; ye must even come up till his mark at yeance, and let him know fra me, *that I will secure him a seat,* for yean of those vary *boroughs.*

Plau. Oh! that will do, Sir Pertinax; that will do, I'll answer for it.

Sir Pert. And further, I beg ye wull let him know, that I think mysel obliged till conseeder him in this affair, ass acting for me ass weel ass for my lord, ass a common friend till baith, and for the service he has already done us, mak my special compliments till him, and pray, let this soft sterling bit of paper be my faithful advocate till convince him what my gratitude further intends for his great [*Gives him a Bank Bill.*] equity, in adjusting this agreement betwixt my lord's family and mine.

Plau. Ha! ha! ha! Sir Pertinax, upon my word this is noble—ay, ay! this is an eloquent bit of paper, indeed.

Sir Pert. Maister Plausible, in aw human dealings the most effectual method is that of ganging at yeance till the vary bottom of a mon's heart—for if we expact that men should serve us, we must first win their affections by serving them—Oh! here they baith come!

Enter LORD LUMBERCOURT *and* SERGEANT EITHERSIDE.

Lord L. My dear Sir Pertinax, what could provoke you to break off this business, so abruptly!—You are really wrong in the point; and if you will give yourself time to recollect, you will find that my having the nomination to the boroughs for my life, was a preliminary article—and I appeal to Mr. Sergeant Eitherside here, whether I did not always understand it so.

Serg. E. I assure you, Sir Pertinax, that in all his lordship's conversation with me upon this business, and in his positive instructions too, we always understood the nomination to be in my lord, durante vitâ, durante vitâ—clearly, clearly, beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Sir Pert. Why, then, my lord, till shorten the dis-

pute, all I can say, in answer till your lordship, is, that there has been a total mistake betwaxt us in that point—and therefore the treaty must end here—I give it up—I wash my honds of it for ever:—for ever.

Plau. Well, but gentlemen, a little patience pray. Sure this mistake, somehow or other, may be rectified—Mr. Sergeant, pray let you and I step into the next room by ourselves, and reconsider the clause relative to the boroughs, and try if we cannot hit upon some medium that will be agreeable to both parties.

Serg. E. Mr. Plausible, I have already considered the clause fully, am entirely master of the question, and my lord cannot give up the point; it is unkind, unreasonable to expect it, and I shall never, never—on no account whatsoever, shall I ever advise him to give it up.

Plau. Nay, Mr. Sergeant, I beg you will not misapprehend me—do not think I want his lordship to give up any point without an equivalent. Sir Pertinax will you permit Mr. Sergeant and me to retire for a few moments, to re-consider this point about the three boroughs.

Sir Pert. We aw my heart and saul, Maister Plausible, any thing till accommodate his lordship—ainy thing—ainy thing.

Plau. What say you, my lord?

Lord L. Nay, I submit it entirely to you, and Mr. Sergeant.

Plau. Come, Mr. Sergeant, let us retire.

Lord L. Ay, ay, go, Mr. Sergeant, and hear what Mr. Plausible has to say, however.

Serg. E. Nay, I will wait on Mr. Plausible, my lord, with all my heart; but I am sure I cannot suggest the shadow of a reason for altering my present opinion:—impossible, impossible, he cannot give them up, it is an opinion from which I never can depart.

Plau. Well, well, do not be positive, Mr. Sergeant

do not be positive. I am sure reason, and your client's conveniency, will always make you alter your opinion.

Serg. E. Ay, ay, reason, and my client's conveniency, Mr. Plausible, will always control my opinion, depend upon it. Ay, ay! there you are right, sir, I attend you. [*Exeunt* LAWYERS.

Sir Pert. I am sorry, my lord, extremely sorry, indeed, that this mistake has happened.

Lord L. Upon honour, and so am I, Sir Pertinax.

Sir Pert. But come, noow, after aw, your lordship, must allow, ye ha been i'the wrong. Come, my dear lord; ye must allow that noow.

Lord L. How so, my dear Sir Pertinax?

Sir Pert. Not aboot the boroughs, my lord, for those I do not mind of a bawbee—but aboot yeer distrust of my friendship, why, do ye think noow, I appeal till your ain breast, my lord; do ye think, I say, that I should ever ha refused, or slighted your lordship's nomination till these boroughs.

Lord L. Why, really, I don't think you would, Sir Pertinax; but one must be directed by one's lawyer, you know.

Sir Pert. Ha! my lord, lawyers are a dangerous species of animals till ha ainy dependence upon—they are awways starting punctilios and deeficulties among friends, why, my dear lord, it is their interest, that aw mankind should be at variance; for disagreement is the vary manure wi whach they enrich and fatten the land of leetigation; and ass they find that that constantly produces the best crop, depend upon it, they wull awways be sure till lay it on ass thick ass they can.

Lord L. Come, come, my dear Sir Pertinax, you must not be angry with the sergeant for his insisting so warmly on this point—for those boroughs, you know, are my sheet anchor.

Sir Pert. I know it, my lord; and as an instance of my promptness to study, and my acquiescence till

your lordship's inclination, ass I see that this Sergeant Eitherside wishes ye weel, and ye him, I think noow, he would be as gude a mon to be returned for yean of those boroughs, as could be pitched upon, and ass such I humbly recommend him till your lordship's consideration.

Lord L. Why, my dear Sir Pertinax, to tell you the truth, I have already promised him; he must be in for one of them, and that is one reason why I insisted so strenuously—he must be in.

Sir Pert. And why not?—why not? is na yeer word a fiat? and wull it na be awways so till me? are ye nait my friend, my patron? and are we nait by this match of our children, to be united intill yean interest?

Lord L. So I understand it, I own, Sir Pertinax.

Sir Pert. My lord, it canna' be otherwise—then for Heaven's sake, ass your lordship and I ha but yean interest for the future, let us ha na mair words aboot these paltry boroughs, but conclude the agreement at yeance—just as it stonds—otherwise there must be new writings drawn, new consultations of lawyers, new objections and delays will arise, creditors wull be impatient and impertinent—so that we shall na finish the Lord knows when.

Lord L. You are right, you are right; say no more, Mac, say no more—split the lawyers—you judge the point better than all Westminster Hall could—it shall stand as it is—yes, it shall be settled your own way, for your interest and mine, are the same; I see plainly. Oh! here the lawyers come—so gentlemen—well, what have ye done—how are your opinions now?

Enter COUNSELLOR PLAUSIBLE *and* SERGEANT EITHERSIDE.

Serg. E. My lord, Mr. Plausible has convinced me—fully convinced me, that the boroughs should be given up to Sir Pertinax.

Plau. Yes, my lord, I have convinced him—I have

laid such arguments before Mr. Sergeant, as were irresistible.

Serg. E. He has, indeed, my lord; for when I come to consider the long friendship that has subsisted between your lordship and Sir Pertinax; the great and mutual advantages that must attend this alliance; the various foreclosing, seizing, distraining and in short every shape of ruin that the law can assume, all which must be put in force, should this agreement go off, and as Sir Pertinax gives his honour, that your lordship's nomination shall be sacredly observed, why, upon a nearer review of the whole affair, I am convinced that it will be the wiser measure to conclude the agreement just as it is drawn—just as it is drawn, my lord, it cannot be more to your advantage.

Lord L. I am very glad you think so, Mr. Sergeant, because that is my opinion too—so my dear Eitherside, do you and Plausible dispatch the business now as soon as possible.

Serg. E. My lord, every thing will be ready for signing in less than an hour—come, Mr. Plausible, let us go and fill up the blanks, and put the last hand to the writings, on our part.

Plau. I attend you, Mr. Sergeant.

[*Exeunt* LAWYERS.

Lord L. And while the lawyers are preparing the writings, Sir Pertinax, I will go and saunter with the women.

Sir Pert. Do, do, my lord, and I will come till you presently.

Lord L. Very well, my dear Mac, I shall expect you. [*Exit singing.*

Sir Pert. So! a leetle flattery, mixt wi the finesse of a guilded promise on yean side, and a quantum sufficit of the aurum palpabile on the other, have at last made me the happiest father in Great Britain, and feel nothing but dignity and elevation, haud! haud! *bide a wee! bide a wee!* I ha yean lettle matter mair *in this affair till adjust,* and then, Sir Pertinax, ye may

dictate till Fortune herself, and send her till govern feuls; while ye show, and convince the world, that wise men awways govern her. Wha's there?

Enter SAM.

Tell my son Egerton, I would speak wee him. Now I ha settled the grand point, [*Exit* SAM.] wi my lord, this I think is the proper juncture till feel the poleetical pulse of my spark, and yeance for aw, till set it to the exact measure that I would ha it constantly beat.

Enter EGERTON.

Come hither, Chairles.

Eger. Your pleasure, sir?

Sir Pert. Aboot twa hours since, I told you, Chairles, that I received this letter express, complaining of your brother's acteevity at an election i'the north, against a particular friend of mine; which has given great offence; and, sir, ye are mentioned in the letter, as weel ass he. To be plain, I must roundly tell ye, that on this interview depends my happiness, ass a mon and a faither, and my affection till ye, sir, ass a son, for the remainder of your days.

Eger. I hope, sir, I shall never do any thing either to forfeit your affection, or disturb your happiness.

Sir Pert. I hope so too; but to the point—the fact is this. There has been a motion made this vary day, to bring on the grand affair, which is settled for Friday se'nnight; noow, sir, ass ye are popular, ha talents, and are weel heard, it is expacted, and I insist upon it, that ye endeavour till atone for yeer misconduct, by preparing and taking a lairge share in that question, and supporting it wi aw your poower.

Eger. Sir, I have always divided as you directed, except on one occasion—never voted against your friends, only in that affair—but, sir, I hope you will *not so exert your influence*, as to insist upon my v-

porting a measure by an obvious, prostituted, sophistry, in direct opposition to my character and my conscience.

Sir Pert. Conscience! did ye ever hear ainy man talk of conscience in poleetical maiters? conscience, quotha, I ha been in parliament these three and tharty years, and never heard the term made use of before—sir, it is an unpairliamentary word, and ye wull be laughed at for it.

Eger. Then, sir, I must frankly tell you, that you work against my nature—would make me a devoted partizan to selfish leaders, who have no friendship but in faction, no merit but in fallacy, no regard to their king, or country, nor to any interest in any measure whatsoever, but their own, and with such men I cannot connect myself. For know, sir, that the malignant ferment, which the venal ambition of the times provokes in the heads and hearts of other men—I detest.

Sir Pert. What are ye aboot, sir; with your malignant, yeer venal ambeetion and your romantic nonsense? Sir, every mon should be ambeetious till serve his country—and every man should be rewarded for it. And pray, sir, would not ye wish till serve yeer country? answer me that, I say, would not ye wish till serve your country?

Eger. Only show me how I can serve my country, and my life is hers. Were I qualified to lead her armies, to steer her fleets, and deal her honest vengeance on her insulting foes; or, could my eloquence pull down a state leviathan, mighty by the plunder of his country, black with the treasons of her disgrace, and send his infamy down to free posterity, as a monumental terror to corrupt ambition, I would be foremost in such service, and act it with the unremitting ardour of a roman spirit.

Sir Pert. Why, ye are mad, sir, stark, staring, raving mad; certainly the fellow has been bitten by some *mad whig, or other!* ye are vary young—vary young,

indeed, in these maiters; but experience wull convince ye, sir, that every mon in public business has twa consciences; mind, sir; twa consciences, a releegious and a poleetical conscience—you see a mairchant, or a shopkeeper, that kens the science of the world, awways luocks upon an oath in a custom house, or behind a counter, only as an oath in business—a thing of course—a mere thing o' course, that has nathing till do wi releegion—and just so it is at an election, exactly the same—for instance, noow, I am a candidate—pray observe—I gang till a periwig maker, a hatter, or a hosier, and I give ten, twanty, or tharty guineas, for a periwig, a hat, or a pair of hose, and so on through a majority o' voters; vary weel; what is the consequence? why, this commercial intercourse, ye see, begets a friendship betwixt us, and in a day or twa, these men gang and give me their suffrages. Weel, what is the inference, pray, sir? can ye, or ainy lawyer, divine, or casuist, caw this a bribe? nai, sir; in fair poleetical reasoning, it is ainly generosity on the ain side, and gratitude on the other—so, sir, let me hai nai mair of yeer releegious, or philosophical refinements: but prepare—attend—and speak till the question, or yé are na son o' mine—sir, I insist upon it.

Enter SAM.

Sam. Sir, my lord says the writings are now ready, and his lordship and the lawyers are waiting for you and Mr. Egerton.

Sir Pert. Vary weel; we'll attend his lordship. [*Exit* SAM.] Come, sir, let us gang doown and dispatch the business. [*Going, is stopped by* EGERTON.

Eger. Sir, with your permission, I beg you will first hear me a word or two upon this subject.

Sir Pert. Weel, sir; what would ye say?

Eger. I have often resolved to let you know [*Bows very low.*] my aversion to this match.

Sir Pert. Hoow, sir?

Eger. But my respect and fear of disobliging you, hitherto kept me silent.

Sir Pert. Your avarsion! hoow dare ye use sic language till me? your avarsion! luock you, sir, I shall cut the matter vary short.—Conseeder—my fortune is na inheritance; aw my ain acquiseetion; I can make ducks and drakes of it; so do not provoke me, but sign the articles directly.

Eger. I beg your pardon, sir; but I must be free on this occasion, and tell you at once, that I can no longer dissemble the honest passion, that fills my heart for another woman.

Sir Pert. Hoow! another woman! and ye villain, how dare ye love another woman without my parmission—but what other woman? wha is she? speak, sir? speak.

Eger. Constantia. [*Bowing very low.*

Sir Pert. Constantia! Oh, ye profligate! what, a creature taken in for charity?

Eger. Her poverty is not her crime, sir, but her misfortune. Her birth is equal to the noblest; and virtue, though covered with a village garb, is virtue still, and of more worth to me, than all the splendour of ermined pride, or redundant wealth; and therefore, sir—

[*Goes up close to him.*

Sir Pert. Haud your jabbering, ye villain; haud your jabbering! none of your romance, or refinement, till me. I ha but yean question till ask ye, but yean question, and then I ha done we ye for ever—for ever—therefore think, before ye answer; wull ye marry the lady, or wull ye break my heart?

Eger. Sir, my presence shall not offend you any longer; but when reason and reflection take their turn, I am sure you will not be pleased with yourself for this impaternal passion. [*Going.*

Sir Pert. Tarry, I command you—and I command ye likewise *not to stir,* till ye ha given me ain answer

—a defeenitive answer—wull ye marry the lady, or wull ye not?

Eger. Since you command me, sir, know then, that I cannot—will not marry her. [*Exit* EGERTON.

Sir Pert. Oh! the villain has shot me through the head; he has cut my vitals! I shall run distracted—there never was sic a bargain ass I ha made wi this fuelish lord—possession of his whole estate, wi three boroughs upon it; sax members, why what an acquiseetion, what consequence! what dignity, what weight till the house of Macsycophant—O! domn the fellow—three boroughs, only for sending doon six broomsticks—Oh! miserable, ever since this fallow came intill the world have I been secretly preparing him for the seat of ministerial dignity, and sure never, never were times so favourable—every thing conspires; for aw the auld poleetical post horses are broken-winded, and foundered, and canna get on, and ass till the rising generation, the vanity of surpassing yean another in what they fuelishly caw taste and ailegance, binds them hond and foot in the chains of luxury; which wull awways set them up till the best bidder; so that if they can but get wherewithal till supply their dissipation, a meenister may convert the poleetical morals of aw sic voluptuaries intill a vote that would sell the nation till Prester John, and their boasted leeberties till the great mogul. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter SIR PERTINAX *and* BETTY.

Sir Pert. Come this way, Betty, come this way; ye are a gude girl, and I'll reward ye for this discovery. Oh! the villain! offer her marriage?

Betty. It is true, indeed, I would not tell your honour a lie for the world; but in troth it lay upon my conscience, and I thought it my duty to tell your worship.

Sir Pert. Ye are right, ye are right; it was yeer duty to tell me, and I'll reward you for it; ye say Maister Sidney is in love wi her too—pray how came you by that intelligence?

Betty. Oh! sir, I know when folks are in love, let them strive to hide it as much as they will; I know it by Mr. Sidney's eyes, when I see him stealing a sly side look at her, by his trembling, his breathing short, his sighing when they are reading together—besides, sir, he made love verses upon her, in praise of her virtue, and her playing upon the music; ay! and I suspect another thing, sir, she has a sweetheart, if not a husband, not far from hence.

Sir Pert. Wha! Constantia?

Betty. Ay, Constantia, sir—lord, I can know the whole affair, sir, only for sending over to Hadley, to Farmer Hilford's youngest daughter, Sukey Hilford.

Sir Pert. Then send this instant, and get me a pa ticular account of it.

Betty. That I will this minute, sir.

Sir Pert. In the mean time keep a strict watc upon Constantia—and be sure ye bring me word whatever new matter ye can pick up aboot her, m son, or this Hadley husband, or sweetheart.

Betty. Never fear, sir.

Sir Pert. Wha's there?

Enter TOMLINS.

Where is Maister Sidney?

Tomlins. In the drawing room, sir.

Sir Pert. Tell him I would speak we him. [*E* TOMLINS.] Why suppose this Sidney noow should privy till his friend Chairles's love for Constantia what then, gude traith it is natural till think that l ain love wull demand the preference—ay, and obt it too—yas! yas! self—self! is an ailoquent advoc on these occasions—for only make it a mon's inter till be a rascal, and I think we may safely depe upon his integreety, in serving himsel.

Enter SIDNEY.

Sid. Sir Pertinax, your servant. Mr. Tomlins t me you desired to speak with me.

Sir Pert. Yes, I wanted till speak wi ye upon vary singular business—Maister Sidney, give me y hond, guin it did na luock like flattery, (which I test,) I would tell ye, Maister Sidney, that ye are honour till your cloth, yeer country, and till hun nature.

Sid. Sir, you are very obliging.

Sir Pert. Sit ye doon here, Maister Sidney—sit doon here by me—my friend [*They sit.*] I am un the greatest obligations till ye, for the care ye ha ta of Chairles—the principles, releegious, moral, *poleetical, that* ye ha infused intill him, demand

warmest return of gratitude, baith fra him, and fra me.

Sid. Your approbation, sir, next to that of my own conscience, is the best test of my endeavours, and the highest applause they can receive.

Sir Pert. Sir, ye deserve it; richly deserve it, and noow, sir, the same care that ye ha had of Chairles, the same my wife has taken of her favourite, and sure never were accomplishments, knowledge, or principles, social and releegious, impressed intill a better nature, than Constantia's.

Sid. In truth, sir, I think so too.

Sir Pert. She is, besides, a gentlewoman, and of ass gude a family ass any in this county.

Sid. So I understand, sir.

Sir Pert. Sir, her faither had a vast estate; the which he dissipated and melted in feastings, and friendships, and charities, hospitalities, and sic kind of nonsense—but to the business—Maister Sidney, I love ye—yas, I love you, and ha been loucking oot, and contriving hoow till settle ye in the world: sir, I want till see ye comfortably and honourably fixed at the heed of a respectable family, and guin ye were my ain son, a thoosand times, I could na make a mair valuable present till ye for that purpose ass a partner for life, than this same Constantia, wee sic a fortune doon wi her, ass ye yoursel shall deem to be competent: ay, and an assurance of every canonical contingency in my poower till confer, or promote.

Sid. Sir, your offer is noble and friendly; but though the highest station would derive lustre from Constantia's charms, and worth; yet, were she more amiable than love could paint her in the lover's fancy, and wealthy beyond the thirst of the miser's appetite, I could not—would not wed her. [*Rises.*

Sir Pert. Not wed her! odzwins, mon! ye surprise me! *why so? what hinders?* [*Rises.*

Sid. I beg you will not ask a reason for my refusal, but briefly and finally, it cannot be, nor is it a subject I can longer converse upon.

Sir Pert. Weel, sir, I ha done, I ha done—sit doon, man—sit doon again—sit ye doon. [*They sit.*] I shall mention it no more—not but I must confess honestly till ye, friend Sidney, that the match, had ye approved of my proposal, besides profiting you, would ha been of singular sarvice till me likewise; hoowever ye may still sarve me ass effectually ass if ye had married her.

Sid. Then, sir, I am sure I will most heartily.

Sir Pert. I believe it, I believe it, friend Sidney, and I thank ye. I ha na friend till depend upon but yeersel—my heart is awmost broke—I canna help these tears; and to tell ye the fact at yeance, your friend Chairles is struck wi a most dangerous malady, a kind of insanity—in short this Constantia, I am afraid, has cast an evil eye upon him—do ye understand me?

Sid. Not very well, sir.

Sir Pert. Why, he is grievously smitten wi the love of her, and I am afraid will never be cured withoot a leetle of your assistance.

Sid. Of my assistance! pray, sir, in what manner?

Sir Pert. Chairles has the utmost deference to any opinion, or judgment, of yours; now if you would advise him against this mad marriage with Constantia—the girl is very poor—a mere dependent on me; could you not hint—a—a—advise—and bring an affair of gallantry between them. [SIDNEY *starts up.*] What is the matter wi ye mon—what the deevil gars ye start and luock so astonished?

Sid. Sir, you amaze me! In what part of my mind, or conduct, have you found that baseness, which entitles you to treat me with this indignity?

Sir Pert. Indignity—what indignity do ye mean,

sir? is asking ye till serve a friend wi a wench an indignity? Sir, am not I your patron, and benefactor, ha?

Sid. You are, sir; and I feel your bounty at my heart—but the virtuous gratitude, that sowed the deep sense of it there, does not inform me, that in return, the tutor's sacred function, or the social virtue of the man, must be debased into the pupil's pandar, or the patron's prostitute.

Sir Pert. Hoow! what, sir, do ye dispute? are ye na my dependent!—ha! and do ye hesitate aboot an ordinary civeelity, which is practised every day by men and women of the first fashion? sir, let me tell ye, however nice ye may be, there is na a dependent aboot the court that would na jump at sic an opportunity till oblige his patron.

Sid. Indeed, sir, I believe the doctrine of pimping for patrons, may be learned in every party school: for where faction and public venality are taught as measures necessary to the prosperity of the Briton, and the patriot—there, every vice is to be expected.

Sir Pert. Oho! Oho! vary weel, fine insinuations! I ken what you glance at—yes, ye intend this satire as a slander upon meenisters—ay! ay! fine sedeetion against government—Oh! ye villain—ye—ye—sirrah—ye are a black sheep, and I'll mark ye, and represent ye; I'll draw your picture—ah! ah! I am glad ye show yoursel—yas, yas,—ye ha taken off the mask at last, ye ha been in my service for many years, ye hypocrite! ye impostor—but, I never knew your principles before.

Sid. Sir, you never affronted them before, if you had you should have known them sooner.

Sir Pert. I ha done wi ye—I ha done wi ye. Ay, ay, noow I can account for my son's conduct; his aversion till courts, till meenisters, levees, public business, *and his disobedience till my commands—a perfeedious fellow*—you're a Judas! ye ha ruined the

morals of my son, ye villain; but I ha done wi ye; however this I wull prophesy at oor pairting, for your comfort, that guin ye air so vary squemish in obliging your patron; ye'll never rise in the church.

Sid. Though my conduct, sir, should not make me rise in her power, I am sure it will in her favour—in the favour of my own conscience too, and in the esteem of all worthy men; and that, sir, is a power and dignity, beyond what patrons of any denomination can confer. [*Exit* SIDNEY.

Sir Pert. What a reegorous, saucy, stiff-necked fallow it is!—I see my folly noow; I am undone by my ain policy! this Sidney was the last man that should ha been aboot my son. The fellow, indeed, hath given him principles that might ha done vary weel among the ancient Romans, but are domned unfit for the modern Britons—weel! guin I had a thoosand sons, I never would suffer yean of yeer English univarsity bred fellows, till be aboot a son of mine again; for they ha sic an a pride of leeterature, and character, and sic saucy English notions of leeberty, conteenually fermenting in their thoughts, that a man is never sure of one of them; but what am I to do? Zoons, he must nai marry this beggar—I canna sit doon tamely under that—stay, haud a wee; by the blood I have it—yas! I ha hit upon't.

Enter BETTY.

Betty. Oh! sir; I have got the whole secret out.

Sir Pert. Aboot what?

Betty. About Miss Constantia; I have just had all the particulars from Farmer Hilford's youngest daughter, Sukey Hilford.

Sir Pert. Weel, weel, but what is the story? quick, quick, what is it?

Betty. Why, sir, it is certain that Mrs. Constantia, has a sweetheart, or a husband, a sort of a gentleman, *or a gentleman's gentleman*, they don't know which,

that lodges at Gaffer Hodges's; for Sukey says she saw them together, last night in the dark walk, and Mrs. Constantia was all in tears.

Sir Pert. Ah! I am afraid this is too gude news till be true.

Betty. Oh! sir, it is certainly true; besides, sir, she has just writ a letter to the gallant; and I have sent John gardener to her, who is to carry it to him to Hadley; now, sir, if your worship would seize the letter. See, see, sir, here John comes, with the letter in his hand!

Sir Pert. Go, go; step ye oot, Betty, and leave the fellow till me.

Betty. I will, sir. [*Exit* BETTY.

Enter JOHN, *with a Packet, and a Letter.*

John. There, go you into my pocket. [*Puts up the Packet.*] There's nobody in the library—so I'll e'en go through the short way; let me see what is the name —Mel—Meltil—O! no! Melville, at Gaffer Hodges's.

Sir Pert. What letter is that, sir?

John. Letter, sir!

Sir Pert. Give it me, sir.

John. An't please your honour, sir—it—it—it is not mine.

Sir Pert. Deliver it this instant, sirrah; or I'll break yeer head.

John. There, there, your honour.

[*Gives the Letter to* SIR PERTINAX.

Sir Pert. Begone rascal—this I suppose will let us intill the whole business.

John. [*Aside.*] You have got the letter, old surly, but the packet is safe in my pocket. I'll go and deliver that, however; for I will be true to poor Mrs. Constantia, in spite of you. [*Exit* JOHN.

Sir Pert. [*Reading the Letter.*] Um!—Um!—Um! *And bless my eyes with the sight of you.* Um! um!

throw myself into your dear arms. Zoouns, this letter is invaluable!

Enter BETTY.

Oh! Betty, ye are an axcellent wench, this letter is worth a million.

Betty. Is it as I suspected, sir, to her sweetheart?

Sir Pert. It is—it is! bid Constantia pack oot of the house, this instant; and let them get the chaise ready, to carry her wherever she pleases; but first send my wife and son hither.

Betty. I shall, sir.

Sir Pert. Do so, begone. [*Exit* BETTY.] Aha! Maister Chairles, I believe I shall cure your passion for a vartuous beggar, noow, I think he canna be so infatuated as to be a dupe till a strumpet—let me see—hoow am I till act noow?—why, like a true poleetician, I must pretend most sincerely where I intend most deceit.

Enter LADY MACSYCOPHANT *and* EGERTON.

Weel, Chairles, notwithstanding the meesery ye ha brought upon me; I ha sent for ye and yeer mother, in order till convince ye baith of my affection, and my readiness till forgive; nay, and even till indulge your perverse passion; for since I find this Constantia has got hold of your heart, and that your mother and ye think, that ye can never be happy withoot her, why I'll na longer oppose yeer inclinations.

Eger. Dear sir, you snatch me from sharpest misery. On my knees let my heart thank you for this goodness.

Lady Mac. Let me express my thanks too; and my joy, for had you not consented to his marrying her, we all should have been miserable.

Sir Pert. Weel, I am glad I ha found a way till *please ye baith at last*—but noow, my dear Chairles,

suppose noow, that this spotless vestal, this wonder of vartue, this idol of your heart, should be a concealed wanton, after aw?

Eger. A wanton, sir! [*Eagerly.*

Sir Pert. Or suppose that she should have an engagement of marriage, or an intrigue wi another mon, and is only making a dupe of ye aw this time; I say only suppose it, my dear, dear Chairles; what would ye think of her?

Eger. I should think her the most deceitful, and the most subtle of her sex, and if possible, would never think of her again.

Sir Pert. Wull ye give me yeer honour of that?

Eger. Most solemnly, sir.

Sir Pert. Enough—I am satisfied. [*Cries with joy.*] You make me young again; I was afraid ye were fascinated wi the charms of a crack. Do ye ken this hond?

Eger. Mighty well, sir.

Sir Pert. And ye, madam?

Lady Mac. As well as I do my own, sir, it is Constantia's.

Sir Pert. It is so; and a better evidence it is, than any that can be given by the human tongue, here is a warm, rapturous, lascivious letter, under the hypocritical syren's ain hond; her ain hond, sir, her ain hond. But judge yourselves——read it.

Eger. [Reads.] *I have only time to tell you, that the family came down sooner than I expected, and that I cannot bless my eyes with the sight of you, till the evening. The notes and jewels, which the bearer of this will deliver to you, were presented to me since I saw you, by the son of my benefactor——*

Sir Pert. Now mark.

Eger. [Reads.] *All which I beg you will convert to your own immediate use, for my heart has no room for any wish, or fortune, but what* contributes to your relief *and happiness——*

Sir Pert. Oh, Chairles, Chairles! do you see, sir, what a dupe she makes of you. But mark what follows; mark, Chairles, mark.

Eger. [Reads.] *Oh, how I long*——

Sir Pert. Mark.

Eger. [Reads.] *To throw myself into your dear, dear, arms*——

Sir Pert. Mark, mark.

Eger. [Reads.] *To sooth your fears, your apprehensions, and your sorrows. I have something to tell you of the utmost moment, but will reserve it till we meet this evening in the dark walk*——in the dark walk?

Sir Pert. In the dark walk—ah! an evil eyed curse upon her! yas, yas, she has been often in the dark walk, I believe—but read, read!

Eger. [Reads.] *In the mean time, banish all fears, and hope the best, from fortune, and your ever dutiful, and ever affectionate*

CONSTANTIA HARRINGTON.

Sir Pert. There, there's a warm epistle for you! in short, the fact is, the hussy, ye must know, is married till the fellow.

Eger. Not unlikely, sir.

Lady Mac. Indeed, by her letter, I believe she is.

Sir Pert. Noow, madam, what amends can ye make me for countenancing your son's passion for sic an a reptile? and ye sir, what ha ye till say for your disobedience and your phrenzy? Oh! Chairles! Chairles, you'll shorten my days! [*Sits down.*

Eger. Pray, sir, be patient—compose yourself a moment; I will make you any compensation in my power.

Sir Pert. Then instantly sign the articles of marriage.

Eger. The lady, sir, has never yet been consulted, *and I have some reason* to believe that her heart is *engaged to another* man.

Sir Pert. Sir, that is na business of yours—I know she wull consent; and that's aw we are till consider Oh! here comes my lord!

Enter LORD LUMBERCOURT.

Lord L. Sir Pertinax, every thing is ready, and the lawyers wait for us.

Sir Pert. We attend your lordship; where is Lady Rodolpha?

Lord L. Giving some female consolation to poor Constantia. Why, my lady? ha! ha! ha! I hear your vestal, Constantia, has been flirting!

Sir Pert. Yas, yas, my lord, she is in very gude order for ainy mon that wants a wife, and an heir till his estate, intill the bargain.

Enter TOMLINS.

Tomlins. Sir, there's a man below, that wants to speak to your honour, upon particular business.

Sir Pert. Sir, I canno speak till ainy body noow—he must come another time; haud—stay, what, is he a gentleman?

Tomlins. He looks something like one, sir; a sort of a gentleman; but he seems to be in a kind of a passion, for when I asked his name, he answered hastily; 'tis no matter, friend, go tell your master there is a gentleman here, that must speak to him directly.

Sir Pert. Must! ha! vary peremptory indeed! pr'ythee let's see this angry sort of a gentleman, for curiosity's sake. [*Exit* TOMLINS.

Enter LADY RODOLPHA.

Lady Rod. Oh! my Lady Macsycophant, I am come an humble advocate, for a weeping piece of female frailty; who begs she may be permitted to speak till your ladyship, before ye finally reprobate her.

Sir Pert. I beg your pardon, Lady Rodolpha, but it *must not be;* see her, she shall not.

Lady Mac. Nay, there can be no harm, my dear, in hearing what she has to say for herself.

Sir Pert. I tell you, it shall not be.

Lady Mac. Well, well, my dear, I have done, I have done.

Enter TOMLINS *and* MELVILLE.

Tomlins. Sir, that is my master.

Sir Pert. Weel, sir, pray what is your urgent business wi me, sir?

Mel. To shun disgrace, and punish baseness.

Sir Pert. Punish baseness! what does the fallow mean? wha are ye, sir?

Mel. A man, sir.

Sir Pert. A mon, sir!

Mel. And one whose spirit and fortune once bore as proud a sway as any within this county's limits.

Lord L. You seem to be a soldier, sir!

Mel. I was, sir, and have the soldier's certificate, to prove my service—rags and scars: for ten long years, in India's parching clime, I bore my country's cause, and in noblest dangers sustained it with my sword—at length ungrateful peace has laid me down, where welcome war first took me up—in poverty—and the dread of cruel creditors. Paternal affection brought me to my native land, in quest of an only child. I found her, as I thought, amiable as paternal fondness could desire, but lust and foul seduction have snatched her from me; and hither am I come, fraught with a father's anger, and a soldier's honour, to seek the seducer, and glut revenge.

Lady Mac. Pray, sir, who is your daughter?

Mel. I blush to own her—but—Constantia.

Omnes. How!

Lady Mac. Constantia!

Eger. Is Constantia your daughter, sir?

Mel. She is, and was the only comfort, that nature, fortune, or my own extravagance had left me.

Sir Pert. Gude traith, then I fancy ye wull find but vary little comfort fra her; for she is na better than she should be—she has had na damage in this mansion; but ye may gang till Hadley, till yean Farmer Hodges's, and there ye may learn the whole story, fra a cheel they caw Melville.

Mel. Melville!

Sir Pert. Yas, sir; Melville.

Mel. O! would to Heaven she had no crime to answer, but her commerce with Melville!—no, sir, he is not the man; it is your son, your Egerton, that has seduced her! and here, sir, are the evidences of his seduction.

Eger. Of my seduction, sir!

Mel. Of yours, sir, if your name be Egerton.

Eger. I am that man, sir; but pray what is your evidence?

Mel. These bills, and these gorgeous jewels—not to be had in her menial state, but at the price of chastity; not an hour since, she sent them, impudently sent them, by a servant of this house; contagious infamy started from their touch.

Eger. Sir, perhaps you may be mistaken concerning the terms, on which she received them; do you but clear her conduct with respect to Melville, and I will instantly satisfy your fears concerning the jewels, and her virtue.

Mel. Sir, you give me new life; you are my better angel—I believe in your words, your looks—know then—I am that Melville.

Sir Pert. Hoow, sir! ye that Melville, that was at Farmer Hodges's?

Mel. The same, sir; it was he brought my Constantia to my arms; lodged and secreted me—once my lowly tenant, now my only friend; the fear of inexorable creditors made me change my name from Harrington *to Melville, till* I could see and consult some, *who once called themselves* my friends.

Eger. Sir, suspend your fears and anger, but for a few minutes—I will keep my word with you religiously; and bring your Constantia to your arms, as virtuous and as happy as you could wish her.

[*Exeunt* LADY MACSYCOPHANT *and* EGERTON.

Sir Pert. The clearing up of this wench's virtue is dom'd unlucky! I'm afraid it wull ruin aw oor affairs again—hoowever, I ha yean stroke still in my heed, that wull secure the bargain wi my lord, let matters gang as they wull. [*Aside.*] But I wonder, Maister Melville, that ye did na pick up some leetle matter of the siller in the Indies—Ah! there ha been bonny fortunes snapped up there of late years by some of the meelitary blades.

Mel. Very true, sir; but it is an observation among soldiers, that there are some men, who never meet with any thing in the service but blows and ill fortune—I was one of those, even to a proverb.

Sir Pert. Ah! 'tis pity, sir; a great pity, noow, that ye did na get a mogul, or some sic an animal intil your clutches—Ah! I should like till ha the strangling of a nabob—the rummaging of his gold dust, his jewel closet, and aw his magazines of bars and ingots; ha! ha! ha! gude traith noow, sic an aw fellow would be a bonny cheel to bring over till this toown, and till exhibit him riding on an elephant; upon honour a mon might raise a poll tax by him, that would gang near till pay the debts of the nation!

Enter EGERTON, CONSTANTIA, LADY MACSYCOPHANT, *and* SIDNEY.

Eger. Sir, I promised to satisfy your fears concerning your daughter's virtue, and my best proof to you and all the world, that I think her not only chaste, but the most deserving of her sex, is, that I have made her the partner of my heart, and the tender guardian of my earthly happiness for life!

Sir Pert. Hoow, married!

Eger. I know, sir, at present, we shall meet your anger—but time, reflection, and our dutiful conduct, we hope, will reconcile you to our happiness.

Sir Pert. Naver, naver; and could I make ye, her, and aw your issue beggars—I would move hell, Heaven, and earth till effect it.

Lord L. Why, Sir Pertinax, this is a total revolution, and will entirely ruin my affairs.

Sir Pert. My lord, wi the consent of your lordship and Lady Rodolpha, I ha an expedient till offer, that wull not ainly punish that rebellious villain, but answer every end that your lordship and Lady Rodolpha proposed by the intended match wee him.

Lord L. I doubt it much, Sir Pertinax; I doubt it much; but what is it, sir? what is your expedient?

Sir Pert. My lord, I ha another son, my son Sandy, the most virtuous lad that ever was born; and provided the lady and your lordship ha na objection till him, every article of that rebel's intended marriage shall be amply fulfilled, upon Lady Rodolpha's union with my younger son, Sandy.

Lord L. Why, that is an expedient, indeed, Sir Pertinax; but what say you, Rodolpha?

Lady Rod. Nay, nay, my lord, as I had na reason till ha the least affection till my Cousin Egerton, and ass my intended marriage wi him was entirely an act of obedience till my grandmother, provided my Cousin Sandy wull be as agreeable till her ladyship, ass my Cousin Chairles, here, would ha been—I have na the least objection till the change; ay, ay, upon honour, yean brother is ass gude to Rodolpha ass another.

Sir Pert. I'll ainswer madam, for your grandmother; noow, my lord, what say you?

Lord L. Nay, Sir Pertinax, so the agreement stands, all is right again; come, child, let us begone. Look-ye, Sir Pertinax, let me have no more perplexity, or trouble about *writings*, lawyers, duns, debts, or daugh-

ter; only let me be at my ease, and rat me if I care one pinch of snuff if her ladyship concorporates with the Cham of Tartary. [*Exit* LORD LUMBERCOURT.

Sir Pert. As to ye, my Lady Macsycophant, I suppose ye concluded, before ye gave your consent till this match, that there would be an end of every thing betwixt ye and me; live wi your Constantia, madam, your son, and that black sheep there; live wi them, ye shall ha a jointure, but not a bawbee besides, living or dead, shall ye, or any of your issue, ever see of mine; and so my vengeance light upon ye aw together! [*Exit* SIR PERTINAX.

Lady Rod. And noow, gude folks, I will leave ye aw with the fag end of an awd north country wish, brought fra the hospitable land of fair Strathbogie; may mutual love and gude humour ever be the guest of your hearts, the theme of your tongues, and the blithsome phantome of aw your tricksy dreams through the rugged road of this crooked, deceitful world; and may our fathers be an example to oorsel's, that will remind us to treat our bairns, should Heaven croon our endeavours, wi more leeberality and affection, than that, with which oour fathers have treated us.

[*Exit* LADY RODOLPHA.

Eger. You seem melancholy, sir.

Mel. These precarious turns of fortune, sir, will press upon the heart: for notwithstanding my Constantia's happiness, and mine in hers, I own I cannot help feeling some regret, that my misfortunes should be the cause of any disagreement between a father and the man, to whom I am under the most endearing obligations.

Eger. You, sir, have no share in his disagreement; for had not you been born, from my father's nature, some other cause of his resentment must have happened; but for a time, sir, at least, and I hope for life, affliction, and angry vicissitudes have taken their leave of us all: if affluence can procure content and

ıe, they are within our reach. My fortune is ample,
ı shall be dedicated to the happiness of this domes-
circle.

y scheme, tho' mock'd by knave, coquet, and fool,
thinking minds must prove this golden rule:
all pursuits—but chiefly in a wife,
ıt wealth, but morals, make the happy life.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

THE END.

FOUNDLING.

TABLE. NOW FOR A SECRET WORTH TWENTY PIECES

ACT III. SCENE II.

Painted by Singleton. *Pub. by Longman & Co. 1816.* *Engraved by C. Heath.*

THE

FOUNDLING;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By EDWARD MOORE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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LONDON.

REMARKS.

" From such dull stuff, what profit can you reap?
" You cry—' 'Tis very fine!'—and fall asleep."

Those lines, from the Epilogue, written by Garrick, have, for the present taste of the town, somewhat too much of truth in them: for assuredly "The Foundling" would not, at this period, have power to keep an audience from the enjoyment of a comfortable slumber. It may, however, be read with pleasure, as a little novel, by which the reader will neither be induced to laugh, to weep, nor to admire—though he may yet be amused by a certain degree of interest, attached to the fable and the events. It was the first dramatic work of a man, since much esteemed for having produced the tragedy of " The Gamester;" notwithstanding both that, and the present drama, met with considerable opposition, on the first night of their representation.

The character of Faddle, in this comedy, was the part at which the audience revolted, when it first appeared; and, no doubt, he is a being whose mind is too much deformed for public exhibition.

" ——————— Such abject trash,
" *Deserves not satire's,* but the hangman's lash."

Nor is Young Belmont, the hero of the piece, more than one degree removed from this, his friend, in baseness; and that distinction is in the article of courage. For this solitary virtue he is allowed, by the author, to be forgiven all his vices, and blessed with the hand of the woman he loves;—yet the play has the reputation of containing an excellent moral.

Sir Charles Raymond, excepting Fidelia, is by far the best drawn character in the whole work—nay, Fidelia, perhaps, should give place to him. Their relationship is well contrived, and would be more interesting, was the discovery less romantically brought about.

Mrs. Cibber, the idol of the public, at the time this comedy first appeared, is said to have been exquisite in the part of the Foundling; but it is a character, which requires, in an actress, abilities, so little at present in use, that it can be hardly conceived what plaintive, or pathetic arts, this performer possessed, to make so insipid a personage have power over the hearts of an audience.

"The Foundling" has been called an imitation of "The Conscious Lovers." If it be so, like all imitations, it falls infinitely beneath the merit of its original.—It was first acted in 1748.

Mr. Moore, the author of this play, wrote, besides his two dramatic works, "The Trial of Selim, the Persian," a poem, in compliment to Lord Lyttelton, which has been praised as a most elegant panegyric—and his "Fables for the Female Sex" have *been compared with* Gay's.—He married a lady, who

was herself poetical, and, in her maiden state, being deeply in love with her future husband (while her passion was a secret both to him and all her friends) her muse prompted her to write a copy of verses to a young lady, her cousin, in which were contained the following lines, perfectly mysterious; till being shown to a number of persons, and to Mr. Moore amongst the rest, he had the sagacity to find out the riddle, and the gratitude to reward its fair authoress with his hand.

" Would you think it, my coz, for the fault I must own,
" Your Jenny, at last, is quite covetous grown:
" Though millions, if fortune should lavishly pour,
" I still should be wretched, if I had not More.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

" You will wonder, my dear, who this charmer can be,
" Whose merit can boast such a conquest as me;
" But you shan't know his name, though I told you before;
" It begins with an M—but I dare not say More.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Robert Belmont	*Mr. Cherry.*
Sir Charles Raymond	*Mr. Wroughton.*
Young Belmont	*Mr. Elliston.*
Villiard	*Mr. Cooke.*
Colonel Raymond	*Mr. Raymond.*
Faddle	*Mr. De Camp.*
John	*Mr. Maddocks.*
Rosetta	*Mrs. Jordan.*
Fidelia	*Miss Cherry.*

SCENE—Sir Robert Belmont's *House, in London.*

THE

FOUNDLING.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S *House.*

Enter YOUNG BELMONT *and* COLONEL RAYMOND.

Bel. My dear Colonel, you are as unlettered in love, as I am in war. What! a woman, a fine woman, a coquette, and my sister!—and to be won by whining! Mercy on us! that a well-built fellow, with common sense, should take pains to unman himself, to tempt a warm girl of two-and-twenty to come to bed to him!—I say, again, and again, Colonel, my sister's a woman.

Ray. And the very individual woman that I want, Charles.

Bel. And, of all women in the world, the least fit for thee. An April day is less changeable than her humour. She laughs behind her fan at what she should not understand; calls humility meanness, and blushing *the want of* education. In all affairs with

a man, she goes by contraries; if you tell her a merry story, she sighs; if a serious one, she laughs; for yes, she says no, and for no, yes; and is mistress of such obedient features, that her looks are always ready to confirm what her tongue utters.

Ray. Fine painting, upon my word, and no flattery!

Bel. This is the lady. Now for the lover. A fellow made up of credulity and suspicion; believing where he should doubt, and doubting where he should believe; jealous without cause, and satisfied without proof. A great boy, that has lost his way, and blubbering through every road, but the right, to find his home again—Ha! ha! ha!

Ray. Mighty florid, indeed, sir!

Bel. Come, come, Colonel; love, that can exalt the brute to a man, has set you upon all-fours. Women are indeed delicious creatures; but not what you think them. The first wish of every mother's daughter is power; the second, mischief! the way to her heart is by indifference, or abuse; for whoever owns her beauty, will feel her tyranny: but if he call her ugly, or a fool, she'll set her cap at him, and take pains for his good opinion.

Ray. And so, submission and flattery are out of your system?

Bel. For submission and flattery, I substitute impudence and contradiction; these two, well managed, my dear, will do more with beauty in an hour, than fine speeches in a year. Your fine woman expects adoration, and receives it as common incense, which every fool offers; while the rude fellow, who tells her truth, claims all attention. Difficulty endears conquest. To him only she appears what she should be to all; and, while she labours with her natural charms to secure him, she's lost herself.

Ray. Why, 'faith, Charles, there may be some *music in these wild notes;* but I am so far gone in

the old ballad, that I can sing no other words to any tune.

Bel. Ha! ha! Thou poor mournful nightingale in a cage, sing on, then! and I'll whistle an upper part with thee, to give a little life to the measure.

Ray. That will be kind; for, Heaven knows, I have need of assistance!—Pr'ythee, tell me, dost think Rosetta wants understanding?

Bel. N——o, 'faith, I think not.

Ray. Good humour?

Bel. Hum——She's generally pleased.

Ray. What, then, can reconcile her behaviour to me, and her fondness for such a reptile as Faddle? A fellow made up of knavery and noise, with scandal for wit, and impudence for raillery; and so needy, that the very devil might buy him for a single guinea. I say, Charles, what can tempt her even to an acquaintance with this fellow?

Bel. Why, the very understanding and good humour you speak of. A woman's understanding is design, and her good humour, mischief. Her advances to one fool are made only to tease another.

Ray. Sir, your most humble servant.

Bel. And her good humour is kept alive by the success of her plots.

Ray. But why so constant to her fool?

Bel. Because her fool's the fittest to her purpose—He has more tricks than her monkey, more prate than her parrot, more servility than her lap-dog, more lies than her woman, and more wit than her—colonel. And, 'faith, all these things considered, I can't blame my sister for her constancy.

Ray. Thou art a wild fellow, and in earnest about nothing but thy own pleasures—and so we'll change the subject. What says Fidelia?

Bel. Why, there, now!—That a man can't instruct another, but he must be told, by way of thanks, how *much he stands in* need of assistance himself!

Ray. Any new difficulties?

Bel. Mountains, Colonel, a few mountains in my way. But, if I want faith to remove them, I hope I shall have strength to climb them, and that will do my business.

Ray. She's a woman, Charles.

Bel. By her outside, one would guess so; but look a little farther, and, except the stubbornness of her temper, she has nothing feminine about her. She has wit without pertness, beauty without consciousness, pride without insolence, and desire without wantonness. In short, she has every thing——

Ray. That you would wish to ruin in her. Why, what a devil are you, Charles, to speak so feelingly of virtues, which you only admire to destroy!

Bel. A very pretty comforter, truly!

Ray. Come, come, Charles, if she is as well born as you pretend, what hinders you from cherishing these qualities in a wife, which you would ruin in a mistress?—Marry her, marry her.

Bel. And hang myself in her garters the next morning, to give her virtues the reward of widowhood.—'Faith, I must read Pamela twice over first. But suppose her not born as I pretend, but the outcast of a beggar, and obliged to chance for a little education?

Ray. Why, then, her mind is dignified by her obscurity; and you will have the merit of raising her to a rank which she was meant to adorn. And where's the mighty matter in all this? You want no addition to your fortune, and have only to sacrifice a little unnecessary pride to necessary happiness.

Bel. Very heroical, upon my word!—And so, my dear Colonel, one way or other, I must be married, it seems.

Ray. If Fidelia can be honest, my life on't, you are of my mind within this fortnight. But, pr'ythee, *since I am not to* believe your former account of her,

who is this delicious girl, that must, and will, get the better of your pride?

Bel. A sister of the Graces, without mortal father or mother; she dropped from the clouds in her cradle, was lulled by the winds, christened by the rains, fostered by a hag, sold for a whore, sentenced to a rape, and rescued by a rogue—to be ravished by her own consent. There's mystery and hieroglyphic for you! and every syllable, my dear, a truth, beyond apocrypha.

Ray. And what am I to understand by all this?

Bel. 'Faith, just as much as your understanding can carry. A man in love is not to be trusted with a secret.

Ray. And, pray, most discreet sir, is Rosetta acquainted with her real history?

Bel. Not a circumstance. She has been amused like you, and still believes her to be the sister of a dead friend of mine, at college, bequeathed to my guardianship. But the devil, I find, owes me a grudge for former virtues; for this sister of mine, who dotes upon Fidelia, and believes every thing I have told her of her family and fortune, has very fairly turned the tables upon me.—She talks of equality of birth, forsooth; of virtue, prudence, and good sense; and bids me bless my stars, for throwing in my way the only woman in the world that has good qualities enough to redeem my bad ones, and make me, what she says every man ought to be—a good husband.

Ray. Was ever poor innocent fellow in such distress!—But what says the old gentleman, your father?

Bel. Why, 'faith, the certainty of a little money would set him at work the same way—But I'll have one trial of skill with them yet.—As I brought her in by one lie, I'll take her out by another—I'll swear she's a whore—that I may get an opportunity to make her *one*.

Ray. Most religiously resolved, upon my word!

Bel. Between you and me, Colonel, has not your old gentleman, Sir Charles, a liquorish look out for Fidelia himself?

Ray. No, upon my honour. I believe his assiduities there, are more to prevent the designs of another, than to forward any of his own.

Bel. As who should say, because I have no teeth for a crust, I'll muzzle the young dog that has. A plague of every thing that's old, but a woman!—for 'tis but varying her vocation a little, and you may make her as useful at fifty-five as fifteen. But what say you to a little chat with the girls this morning? I believe we shall find them in the next room.

Ray. Not immediately—I have an appointment at White's.

Bel. For half an hour, I am your man there too.—D'ye return so soon?

Ray. Sooner, if you will.

Bel. With all my heart. *Allons!* [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter ROSETTA *and* FIDELIA, *meeting.*

Ros. O, my dear! I was just coming to see if you were dressed. You look as if you had pleasant dreams last night.

Fid. Whatever my dreams were, they can't disturb the morning's happiness, of meeting my dear Rosetta so gay and charming.

Ros. My sweet creature!—But what were your *dreams?*

Fid. O, nothing—A confusion of gay castles, built by Hope, and thrown down by Disappointment.

Ros. O barbarous!——Well, for my part, I never built a castle in my sleep, that would not last till doomsday. Give me a dream, and I am mistress of the creation. I can do what I will with every man in it—And power, power, my dear, sleeping or waking, is a charming thing!

Fid. Now in my opinion, a woman has no business with power——Power admits no equal, and dismisses friendship for flattery. Besides, it keeps the men at a distance, and that is not always what we wish.

Ros. But then, my dear, they'll come when we call them, and do what we bid them, and go when we send them——There's something pretty in that, sure ——And for flattery—take my word for't, 'tis the highest proof of a man's esteem—'Tis only allowing what one has not, because the fellow admires what one has—And she that can keep that, need not be afraid of believing she has more.

Fid. Ay, if she can keep that. But the danger is, in giving up the substance for the shadow.——Come, come, my dear, we are weak by nature; and 'tis but knowing that we are so, to be always upon our guard. Fear may make a woman strong, but confidence undoes her.

Ros. Ha! ha! how different circumstances direct different opinions! You are in love with a rake of a fellow, who makes you afraid of yourself——And I hold in chains a mighty colonel, who's afraid of me. And so, my dear, we both go upon right principles. Your weakness keeps you upon your guard, and my power leaves me without danger.

Fid. And yet you must forgive me, if I tell you, that you love this colonel.

Ros. Who told you so, my dear creature?

Fid. I know it by the pains you take to vex him. Besides, I have seen you look as if you did.

Ros. Look, child!——Why, don't I look like other people?

Fid. Ay, like other people in love. Oh, my dear, I have seen just such looks in the glass, when my heart has beat at my very lips.

Ros. Thou art the most provoking creature—

Fid. You must pardon me, Rosetta—I have a heart but little inclined to gaiety; and am rather wondering, that when happiness is in a woman's power, she should neglect it for trifles—or how it should ever enter her thoughts, that the rigour of a mistress can endear the submission of a wife.

Ros. As certain, my dear, as the repentance of a sinner outweighs in opinion the life of a saint. But, to come to serious confession, I have, besides a woman's inclination to mischief, another reason for keeping off a little——I am afraid of being thought mercenary.

Fid. Heyday!—why, are you not his equal every way?

Ros. That's not it—I have told you, that before his father's return from exile—You know his unhappy attachments to a successless party——This colonel (brought up in our family, and favoured by Sir Robert and my brother) laid violent siege to me for a whole year. Now though I own I never disliked him, in all that time, either through pride, folly, or a little mischief, I never gave him the least hint, by which he could guess at my inclinations.

Fid. Right woman, upon my word!

Ros. 'Tis now about three months, since the king, in his goodness, recalled Sir Charles; and, by restoring the estate, made the colonel heir to a fortune, more than equal to my expectations. And now, to confess all, the airs that folly gave me before, reason bids me continue——for to surrender my heart at once to this new made commander, would look as if the poor colonel had wanted a bribe for the governor. Besides, *he has affronted my pride*, in daring to imagine I

could descend so low, as to be fond of that creature, Faddle. A fellow, formed only to make one laugh—a cordial for the spleen, to be bought by every body; and just as necessary in a family as a monkey. For which insolence, I must and will be revenged.

Fid. Well, I confess, this looks a little like reason. But, are you sure, all this while, the colonel, in despair, won't raise the siege, and draw off his forces to another place?

Ros. Pshaw! I have a better opinion of the men, child. Do but ply them with ill usage, and they are the gentlest creatures in the world. Like other beasts of prey, you must tame them by hunger—but if once you feed them high, they are apt to run wild, and forget their keepers.

Fid. And are all men so, Rosetta?

Ros. By the gravity of that question, I'll be whipped now, if you don't expect me to say something civil of my brother—Take care of him, Fidelia, "for hunger can't tame him, nor fulness make him wilder." ——To leave you to his guardianship, was setting the fox to keep the chicken.

Fid. Wild as he is, my heart can never beat to another—And then I have obligations, that would amaze you.

Ros. Obligations!—Let me die, if I would not marry my colonel's papa, and put it out of his power to oblige, or disoblige me.

Fid. Still you banter me with Sir Charles—Upon my life, he has no more designs upon me than you have—I know no reason for his friendship, but his general humanity, or perhaps the singularity of my circumstances.

Ros. Why, as you say, youth and beauty are particular circumstances to move humanity—Ha! ha! ha!—Oh, my dear, time's a great tell-tale, and will discover *all*—*What* a sweet mamma shall I have, *when I marry the* colonel!

Enter YOUNG BELMONT *and* COLONEL RAYMOND.

Bel. When you marry the colonel, sister!—A match, a match, child!—Here he is, just in the nick; and, 'faith, as men go, very excellent stuff for a husband.

Ray. Those were lucky words, madam.

Ros. Perhaps not so lucky, if you knew all, sir.—Now, or never, for a little lying, Fidelia, if you love me. [*Apart to* FIDELIA.

Fid. I'll warrant you, my dear—You must know, sir, [*To* BELMONT.] that your sister has taken it into her head, that the colonel's father is my lover.

Ros. What is she going to say now? [*Aside.*

Fid. And as she looks upon herself to be as good as married to the colonel——

Ros. Who I!—I!—

Fid. She has been settling some family affairs with her new mamma here: and, upon my word, she's a sweet contriver!

Ros. And you think I won't be even with you for this, Fidelia?

Bel. Sister!

Ray. And was it so, madam?—And may I hope?

Ros. Was it so, madam?—And may I hope? [*Mocking him.*] No, sir, it was not so, and you may not hope—Do you call this wit, Fidelia?

Fid. My dear creature, you must allow me to laugh a little—Ha! ha! ha!

Ros. 'Tis mighty well, madam—Oh, for a little devil at my elbow now, to help out invention! [*Aside.*

Bel. Ha! ha! ha!—Won't it come, sister?

Ros. As soon as your manners, brother. You and your grave friend there have been genteelly employed indeed, in listening at the door of a lady's chamber: and then, because you heard nothing for your purpose, to turn my own words to a meaning, I should *hate myself for dreaming of.*

Bel. Why, indeed, child, we might have perplexed you a little, if Fidelia had not so artfully brought you off.

Ros. Greatly obliged to her, really!

[*Walking in disorder.*

Ray. I never knew till now, Rosetta, that I could find a pleasure in your uneasiness.

Ros. And you think, sir, that I shall easily forgive this insolence? But you may be mistaken, sir.

Bel. Poor thing, how it pants! Come, it shall have a husband! We must about it immediately, Colonel, for she's all over in a flame.

Ros. You grow impertinent, brother. Is there no relief? [*Aside.*

Bel. Shall I lift up the sash for a little air, child?

Enter SERVANT.

Ros. So, John!—Have you delivered the card I gave you?

Serv. Yes, madam; and Mr. Faddle desires his compliments to your ladyship, and Madam Fidelia.

Ros. Mr. Faddle, John!——Where did you see him?

Serv. He met me in the street, madam, and made me step into a coffee-house with him, till he wrote this, madam. [*Delivers a Letter, and exit.*

Ros. Oh, the kind creature!—Here's a letter from Mr. Faddle, Fidelia!—Fortune, I thank thee for this little respite. [*Aside, and reading the Letter.*

Ray. Does she suffer the fool to write to her too?

Fid. What, pining, colonel, in the midst of victory?

Ray. To receive his letters, madam!—I shall run mad.

Bel. So!—Away prop, and down scaffold—All's over, I see.

Ros. Oh, Fidelia!—You shall hear it You shall all hear it—*And there's* something in't about the colonel too.

Ray. About me, madam? [*Peevishly.*

Ros. Nay, colonel, I am not at all angry now. Methinks this letter has made me quite another creature.—To be sure, Mr. Faddle has the most gallant way of writing! But his own words will speak best for him. [*Reads.*

Dear creature,

Since I saw you yesterday, time has hung upon me like a winter in the country; and unless you appear at rehearsal of the new opera this morning, my sun will be in total eclipse for two hours. Lady Fanny made us laugh last night, at What's my Thought like, by comparing your colonel to a great box o' the ear—Because it was very rude, she said, and what nobody cared for—I have a thousand things to say, but the clamour of a coffee house is an interruption to the sentiments of love and veneration, with which I am,

Madam, most unspeakably yours,
William Faddle.

——Is it not very polite, colonel?

Ray. Extremely, madam!—Only a little out as to the box o' the ear; for you shall see him take it, madam, as carelessly as a pinch of snuff.

Ros. Fie, colonel! You would not quarrel before a lady, I hope. Fidelia, you must oblige me with your company to the rehearsal—I'll go put on my capuchin, and step into the coach, this moment.

Fid. I am no friend to public places; but I'll attend you, madam.

Ros. You'll come, colonel?

Ray. To be sure, madam.

Bel. Sister!—Oh, you're a good creature!

[*Exit* ROSETTA, *laughing affectedly.*

Fid. Shall we have your company, sir? [*To* BELMONT.

Bel. We could find a way to employ time better,

child——But I am your shadow, and must move with you every where. [*Exit* FIDELIA.]—Ha! ha! ha!——How like a beaten general dost thou look now!—while the enemy is upon the march, to proclaim Te Deum for a complete victory!

Ray. I am but a man, Charles, and find myself no match for the devil and a woman.

Bel. Courage, boy!—and the flesh and the devil may be subdued—Ha! ha! ha!—Such a colonel!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S *House.*

Enter SIR ROBERT BELMONT *and* SIR CHARLES RAYMOND.

Sir R. A voracious young dog!—Must I feed ortolans to pamper his gluttony!

Sir C. Be under no apprehensions, Sir Robert; Mr. Belmont's excesses are mitigated by the levity of youth, and a too early indulgence. In his moments of thinking, I know him generous and noble—And for Fidelia;——I think I can be answerable for her conduct, both in regard to what she owes herself, and you.

Sir R. Why, look you, Sir Charles, the girl's a sweet girl, and a good girl—and beauty's a fine thing, *and virtue's a fine thing*——But as for marriage!—

Why, a man may buy fine things too dear. A little money, Sir Charles, would set off her beauty, and find her virtue employment—But the young rogue does not say a word of that of late.

Sir C. Nor of marriage, I am sure—His love of liberty will prevent your fears one way, and, I hope, Fidelia's honour, another.

Sir R. Must not have her ruined though!

Sir C. Fear it not, Sir Robert,—And when next you see your son, be a little particular in your inquiries about her family and circumstances—If she is what her behaviour bespeaks her, and he pretends, a lady of birth and fortune—why, secrets are unnecessary: if he declines an explanation, look upon the whole as a contrivance to cover purposes, which we must guard against.

Sir R. What, you don't think the rogue has had her, hah, Sir Charles?

Sir C. No, upon my honour—I hold her innocence to be without stain! But, to deal freely with my friend, I look upon her story as strange, and improbable—An orphan, of beauty, family, and fortune, committed by a dying brother, to the sole care of a licentious young fellow! You must pardon me, Sir Robert.

Sir R. Pray go on, sir.

Sir C. Brought in at midnight too! And then, a young creature so educated, and so irresistibly amiable, to be, in all appearance, without alliance, friend or acquaintance, in the wide world!—a link, torn off from the general chain!—I say, Sir Robert, this is strange!

Sir R. By my troth, and so it is!

Sir C. I know not why I am so interested in this lady's concerns; but yesterday, I indulged my curiosity with her, perhaps, beyond the bounds of good-manners—*I gave* a loose to my suspicion, and added *oaths of secrecy* to my inquiries. But her answers

only served to multiply my doubts; and, still as I persisted, I saw her cheeks covered with blushes, and her eyes swimming in tears—But, my life upon't, they were the blushes and the tears of innocence!

Sir R. We must, and will, be satisfied, Sir Charles.

Sir C. For who knows, while we are delaying, but some unhappy mother, perhaps of rank too, may be wringing her hands, in bitterness of misery, for this lost daughter.—Girls, who have kept their virtue, Sir Robert, have done mad things for a man they love.

Sir R. And so, indeed, they have—I remember, when I was a young fellow myself——But is not that my Charles, coming through the hall yonder?

Sir C. Ay, Sir Robert.—Attack him now—But let your inquiries have more the show of accidental chat, than design; for too much earnestness may beget suspicion—And so, sir, I leave you to your discretion. [*Exit.*

Sir R. You shall see me again before dinner——A plague of these young, rakehelly rogues! a girl's worth twenty of them—if one could but manage her.

Enter YOUNG BELMONT, *repeating,*

No warning of th' approaching flame,
Swiftly, like sudden death, it came;
Like mariners, by lightning kill'd,
I burnt the moment——

My dear sir, I have not seen you to-day before!

Sir R. What, studying poetry, boy, to help out the year's allowance?

Bel. 'Faith, sir, times are hard, and unless you come down with a fresh hundred now and then, I may go near to disgrace your family—and turn poet.

Sir R. And so want friends all thy life after!—But now we talk of money, Charles, what art thou doing with *Fidelia's money?* I am thinking, that a round

sum thrown into the stocks now, might turn to a pretty tolerable account.

Bel. The stocks, sir?

Sir R. Ay, boy—My broker will be here after dinner, and he shall have a little chat with thee, about laying out a few of her thousands.

Bel. I hope he'll tell us where we shall get these thousands. [*Aside.*

Sir R. Thou dost not answer me, Charles—Art dumb, boy?

Bel. Why, to be sure, sir, as to that———Fidelia—I can't say, but that she may——However, that is, you know, sir—If, as to possibility—Will your broker be here after dinner, sir?

Sir R. Take a little time, Charles; for, at present, thou dost not make thyself so clearly understood.

Bel. Quite right, to be sure, sir—Nothing could, beyond all doubt, be more judicious, or more advantageous—Her interest, sir—why, as to that—a pretty fortune—but—did you know her brother, sir?

Sir R. Who I, child?—No.

Bel. 'Faith, nor I neither. [*Aside.*]—Not know Jack, sir?—The rogue would have made you laugh.—Did I never read you any of his epigrams?—But then, he had such an itch for play!—Why, he would set you a whole fortune at a cast!—And such a mimic too!—But no economy in the world!——Why, it cost him a cool six thousand, to stand for member once—Oh, I could tell you such stories of that election, sir——

Sir R. Pr'ythee, what borough did he stand for?

Bel. Lord, sir!—He was flung all to nothing——My Lord What-d'ye-call-um's son carried it, fifteen to one, at half the expense—In short, sir, by his extravagance, affairs are so perplexed, so very intricate that, upon my word, sir, I declare it, I don't know what *to think* of them—A pox of these questions! [*Aside.*

Sir R. But she has friends and relations, Charles

—I fancy, if I knew who they were, something might be done.

Bel. Yes, yes, sir, she has friends and relations—I see, sir, you know nothing of her affairs——Such a string of them!—The only wise thing her brother ever did, was making me her guardian, to take her out of the reach of those wretches—I shall never forget his last words—Whatever you do, my dear Charles, says he, taking me by the hand, keep that girl from her relations. Why, I would not, for a thousand pounds, sir, that any of them should know where she is.

Sir R. Why, we have been a little cautious, Charles —but where does the estate lie?

Bel. Lord, sir!—an estate and no estate—I wonder a man of your knowledge would ask the question.—An earthquake may swallow it, for any thing I care.

Sir R. But where does it lie, Charles?—In what county, I say?

Bel. And then, there's the six thousand pounds, that her father left her——

Sir R. What! that gone too, Charles?

Bel. Just as good, I believe—Every shilling on't in a lawyer's hands.

Sir R. But she is not afraid to see him too, Charles?—Where does he live?

Bel. Live, sir?—Do you think such a fellow ought to live?—Why, he has trumped up a contract of marriage with this girl, sir, under the penalty of her whole fortune—There's a piece of work for you!

Sir R. But has he no name, Charles? What is he called, I say?

Bel. You can't call him by any name, that's too bad for him—But, if I don't draw his gown over his ears—why, say I am a bad guardian, sir, that's all.

Sir R. If this should be apocryphal now?

Bel. Sir?

Sir R. A fetch! a fib, Charles—to conceal some honest man's daughter, that you have stolen, child!

Bel. And brought into a sober family, to have the entire possession of, without let, or molestation!——Why, what a deal of money have you lavished away, sir, upon the education of a fool!

Sir R. There is but that one circumstance to bring thee off—For, to be sure, her affairs might have been as well settled in private lodgings——And, besides, Charles, a world of troublesome questions, and lying answers, might have been saved. But take care, boy, for I may be in the secret before thou art aware on't. ——A great rogue, Charles! [*Exit.*

Bel. So! the mine's sprung, I see, and Fidelia has betrayed me—And yet, upon cooler thoughts, she durst not break her word with me; for though she's a woman, the devil has no part in her.—Now will I be hanged, if my loving sister is not at the bottom of all this—But if I don't out-plot her——Let me see—Ay—Faddle shall be called in—for the fool loves mischief, like an old maid, and will outlie an attorney.

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. What, musing, brother!—Now would I fain know, which, of all the virtues, has been the subject of your contemplations.

Bel. Patience, patience, child; for he, that has connexion with a woman, let her be wife, mistress, or sister, must have patience.

Ros. The most useful virtue in the world, brother! —and Fidelia shall be your tutoress—I'll hold six to four, that she leads you into the practice on't, with more dexterity, than the best philosopher in England ——She shall teach it, and yet keep the heart without hope, brother.

Bel. Why, that's a contrary method to yours, sister: for you give hope, where you mean to try pa-

tience most, and, I take it, you are the abler mistress in the art. Why, every coxcomb in town, has been your scholar, child.

Ros. Not to learn patience; there's your mistake now; for it has been my constant practice, to put my scholars out of all patience. What are you thinking of, brother?

Bel. Why, I was thinking, child, that 'twould be a question to puzzle a conjurer, what a coquette was made for.

Ros. Am I one, brother?

Bel. Oh, fie, sister!

Ros. Lord! I, that am no conjurer, can tell you that—A coquette!—Oh!—Why, a coquette is a sort of beautiful desert in wax-work, that tempts the fool to an entertainment, merely to baulk his appetite.—And will any one tell me that nature had no hand in the making a coquette, when she answers such wise and necessary purposes?—Now, pray, sir, tell me what a rake was made for?

Bel. Am I one, sister?

Ros. Oh, fie, brother!

Bel. Nay, child, if a coquette be so useful in the system of morals, a rake must be the most horrid thing in nature—He was born for her destruction, child: she loses her being at the very sight of him, and drops plump into his arms, like a charmed bird, into the mouth of a rattlesnake.

Ros. Bless us all!—What a mercy it is, that we are brother and sister!

Bel. Be thankful for't night and morning, upon your knees, hussy; for I should certainly have been the ruin of you—But come, Rosetta—'tis allowed then, that we are rake and coquette—And now, do you know, that the essential difference between us, lies only in two words—petticoat and breeches.

Ros. Ay, make that out, and you'll do something.

Bel. Pleasure, child, is the business of both—and

the same principles that make me a rake, would make you—no better than you should be, were it not for that tax upon the petticoat, called scandal. Your wishes are restrained by fear; mine, authorized by custom: and, while you are forced to sit down with the starved comfort of making men fools, I am upon the wing to make girls—women, child.

Ros. Now, as I hope to be married, I would not be a rake, for the whole world—unless I were a man; and then, I do verily believe, I should turn out just such another.

Bel. That's my dear sister! Give me your hand, child——Why, now thou art the honestest girl in St. James's parish; and I'll trust thee for the future, with all my secrets—I am going to Fidelia, child.

Ros. What a pity 'tis, brother, that she is not such a coquette as I am!

Bel. Not so, neither, my sweet sister; for, 'faith, the conquest will be too easy to keep a man constant.

Ros. Civil creature!

Bel. But here comes the colonel—Now to our several vocations—You to fooling, and I to business—At dinner we'll meet, and compare notes, child.

Ros. For a pot of coffee, I succeed best.

Bel. 'Faith, I'm afraid so. [*Exit.*

Enter COLONEL RAYMOND.

Ray. To meet you alone, madam, is a happiness—

Ros. Pray, Colonel, are you a rake? Methinks, I would fain have you a rake.

Ray. Why so, madam? 'Tis a character I never was fond of.

Ros. Because I am tired of being a coquette; and my brother says, that a rake can transform one, in the flirt of a fan.

Ray. I would be any thing, madam, to be better *in your opinion.*

Ros. If you were a rake, now, what would you say to me?

Ray. Nothing, madam—I would——

[*Snatches her Hand, and kisses it.*

Ros. Bless me! is the man mad? I only asked what you would say to me.

Ray. I would say, madam, that you are my life—my soul—my angel! That all my hopes of happiness are built upon your kindness!

Ros. Very well—keep it up!

Ray. That your smiles are brighter than virtue, and your chains, sweeter than liberty!

Ros. Upon my word!

Ray. Oh, Rosetta! How can you trifle with a heart that loves you?

Ros. Very well—Pathetic too!

Ray. Pshaw! this is not in your nature.

Ros. Suspicion!—Pretty enough!

Ray. You know I have not deserved this.

Ros. Anger too!—Go on!

Ray. No, madam; Faddle can divert you this way, at an easier price.

Ros. And jealousy!—All the vicissitudes of love! Incomparable!

Ray. You will force me to tell you, madam, that I can bear to be your jest no longer.

Ros. Or thus——

Am I the jest of her I love?
Forbid it, all the gods above!

It may be rendered either way—But I am for the rhyme—I love poetry vastly—Don't you love poetry, Colonel?

Ray. This is beyond all patience, madam!

[*Very angrily.*

Ros. Bless me! Why, you have not been in earnest, Colonel?—Lord, Lord, how a silly woman may be mistaken!

Ray. Shall I ask you one serious question, madam?

Ros. Why, I find myself somewhat whimsical this morning—and I don't care if I do take a little stuff; but don't let it be bitter.

Ray. Am I to be your fool always, madam, or, like other fools, to be made a husband of, when my time's out?

Ros. Lord, you men-creatures do ask the strangest questions!—Why, how can I possibly say now, what I shall do ten years hence?

Ray. I am answered, madam.

[*Walking in disorder.*

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Faddle, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE.

Faddle. Oh, my dear, soft toad!—And the colonel by all that's scarlet! Now, plague catch me, if nature ever formed so complete a couple—since the first pair in Paradise!

Ros. 'Tis well you are come, Faddle; Give me something to laugh at, or I shall die with the spleen.

Ray. Ay, sir, make the lady laugh, this moment, or I shall break your bones, rascal!

Faddle. Lord, Colonel!—What!—What!—hah!

Ros. Make her laugh this instant, I say, or I'll make you cry—Not make her laugh, when she bids you!—Why, sirrah!—I have made her laugh this half hour, without bidding.

Ros. Ha! ha! ha!

Faddle. Why, there, there, there, Colonel!—She does, she does!

Enter YOUNG BELMONT *and* FIDELIA.

Bel. Why, how now, Faddle? What has been the matter, pr'ythee?

Ray. A rascal! Not make a lady laugh!

Faddle. *What,* Charles, and my little Fiddy, too!

Stand by me a little; for this robust colonel has relaxed my very sinews, and quite tremulated my whole system.—I could not have collected myself, without your presence.

Fid. And was he angry with you, Faddle?

Faddle. To a degree, my dear—But I have forgot it—I bear no malice to any one in the world, child.

Ros. Do you know, Faddle, that I have a quarrel with you too?

Faddle. You, child!—Heh! heh!—What, I am inconstant, I suppose—and have been the ruin of a few families this winter, hah, child?—Murder will out, though it's done in the centre——But, come, *vicace!* Let the storm loose—and you shall see me weather it, like the osier in the fable—it may bend, but not break me.

Ros. Nay, it shall come in a breeze—I'll whisper it. [*Whispers* FADDLE.

Bel. Colonel!

Ray. Now I could cut my throat, for being vexed at this puppy; and yet the devil, jealousy, will have it so. [*Apart to* BELMONT.

Faddle. Oh, what a creature have you named, child!—Heh! heh! heh!—May grace renounce me, and darkness seal my eye-lids, if I would not as soon make love to a miller's doll!

Bel. Pr'ythee, what mistress has she found out for thee, Faddle?

Faddle. By all that's odious, Charles, Miss Gargle, the 'pothecary's daughter!—the toad is fond of me, that's positive—but such a mess of water-gruel!—— Ugh—To all purposes of joy, she's an armful of dry shavings! And then, she's so jealous of one!—Lord, says she, Mr. Faddle, you are eternally at Sir Robert's—one can't set eyes upon you in a whole day —Heh! heh! And then the tears do so trickle down those white-wash cheeks of hers, that, if she could but warm me to the least fit of the heart-burn, I be-

lieve I should be tempted to take her, by way of chalk and water—Heh! heh! heh!

Bel. Ros. Fid. Ha! ha! ha!

Ros. Isn't he a pleasant creature, Colonel?

Ray. Certainly, madam, of infinite wit, with abundance of modesty!

Faddle. Pugh! Plague of modesty, Colonel! But do you know, you slim toad, you, [*To* ROSETTA.] what a battle I had last night, in a certain company, about you, and that ugly gipsy there?

Fid. Meaning me, sir?

Faddle. Pert, and pretty!—You must know, there was Jack Taffaty, Billy Cruel, Lord Harry Gymp, and I, at Jack's lodgings, all in tip-top spirits, over a pint of burgundy—a pox of all drinking though!—I shall never get it out of my head.—Well, we were toasting a round of beauties, you must know: The girl of your heart, Faddle, says my lord. Rosetta Belmont, my lord, says I—and, 'faith, down you went, you delicate little devil you, in almost half a glass. Rot your toast, says my lord, I was fond of her last winter.—She's a wit, says Jack; And a scold, by all that's noisy! says Billy.—Isn't she a little freckled, says my lord—Damnationly padded, says Jack; and painted like a Dutch doll, by Jupiter! says Billy.—She's very unsusceptible, says my lord.——No more warmth than a snow-ball, says Jack.—A mere cold-bath to a lover, curse catch me! says Billy.—Heh! heh! heh! says I, that's because you want heart to warm her, my dears: to me, now, she's all over combustibles; I can electrify her by a look: touch but her lip, and snap she goes off, in a flash of fire!

Ros. Oh, the wretch! what a picture has he drawn of me! [*To* FIDELIA.

Fid. You must be curious, my dear.

Bel. Ha! ha! But you forgot Fidelia, Faddle.

Faddle. Oh! And there's the new face, says Billy —*Fidelia, I think* they call her.—If she was an ay-

purtenance of mine, says my lord, I'd hang her upon a peg in my wardrobe, amongst my cast clothes.—— With those demure looks of hers, says Jack, I'd send her to my aunt in Worcestershire, to set her face by, when she went to church. Or, what think you, says Billy, of keeping her in a show-glass, by way of—— gentlemen and ladies, walk in, and see the curiosity of curiosities—the perfect Pamela in high life! Observe Gentlemen, the blushing of her cheeks, the turning-up of her eyes, and her tongue, that says nothing but fie! fie!—Ha! ha! ha!—Incomparable! said all three—Pugh! pox! says I, not so bad as that, neither: the little toad has not seen much of the town indeed—but she'll do, in time; and a glass of preniac may serve one's turn, you know, when champaign is not to be had. [*Bowing to* ROSETTA.

All. Ha! ha! ha!

Bel. Why, thou didst give it them, 'faith, bully!

Enter SERVANT, *and whispers* ROSETTA.

Ros. Come, gentlemen, dinner waits——We shall have all your companies, I hope?

Bel. You know, you dine with me, at the King's Arms, Faddle? [*Apart to* FADDLE.

Faddle. Do I? I am sorry, my dear creature, that a particular appointment robs me of the honour. [*To* ROSETTA.

Ros. Pshaw! you are always engaged, I think.—Come, Fidelia. [*Exeunt* ROSETTA *and* FIDELIA.

Ray. Why, then, thank Heaven, there's some respite. [*Exit.*

Bel. Hark you, Faddle; I hope you are not in the least ignorant, that, upon particular occasions, you can be a very great rascal?

Faddle. Who, I, Charles?—Pugh! Plague! Is this the dinner *I am to have?*

Bel. Courage, boy! And, because I think so well

of thee, there—[*Gives him a Purse.*] 'twill buy thee a new laced coat, and a feather.

Faddle. Why, ay, this is something, Charles!—But what am I to do, hah? I won't fight, upon my soul, I won't fight!

Bel. Thou canst lie a little?

Faddle. A great deal, Charles, or I have spent my time among women of quality, to little purpose.

Bel. I'll tell thee, then.—This sweet girl, this angel, this stubborn Fidelia, sticks so at my heart, that I must either get the better of her, or run mad.

Faddle. And so, thou wouldst have me aiding and abetting, hah, Charles? Must not be tucked up for a rape, neither.

Bel. Peace, fool! About three months ago, by a very extraordinary adventure, this lady dropped into my arms. It happened, that our hearts took fire at first sight: But, as the devil would have it, in the hurry of my first thoughts, not knowing where to place her, I was tempted, for security, to bring her to this haunted house here, where, between the jealousy of Sir Charles, the gravity of the colonel, the curiosity of a sister, and the awkward care of a father, she must become a vestal, or I—a husband.

Faddle. And so, by way of a little simple fornication, you want to remove her to private lodgings, hah, Charles?

Bel. But how, how, how, thou dear rascal?

Faddle. Let me see—Hum—And so, you are not her guardian, Charles?

Bel. Nor she, the woman she pretends, boy—I tell thee, she was mine by fortune—I tilted for her at midnight——But the devil tempted me, I say, to bring her hither—The family was in bed, which gave me time for contrivance—I prevailed upon her to call me guardian, that, by pretending authority over her, *I might remove* her at pleasure; but here too, I was

deceived—My sister's fondness for her, has rendered every plot of mine to part them, impracticable—And without thy wicked assistance, we must both die in our virginity.

Faddle. Hum! That would be a pity, Charles—But let me see—Ay—I have it.—Within these three hours, we'll contrive to set the house in such a flame, that the devil himself may take her—if he stand at the street door—To dinner, to dinner, boy! 'Tis here, here, here, Charles!

Bel. If thou dost——

Faddle. And if I don't—why, no more purses, Charles.—I tell thee, 'tis here, here, boy! To dinner! to dinner! [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S *House.*

Enter ROSETTA *and* FIDELIA.

Fid. 'Tis all your own doing, my dear. You first tease him into madness, and then wonder to hear his chains rattle.

Ros. And yet how one of my heavenly smiles sobered him again!

Fid. If I were a man, you should use me so but once, Rosetta.

Ros. Pshaw!—If you were a man, you would do as

men do, child—Ha! ha! ha!—They are creatures of robust constitutions, and will bear a great deal—Besides, for my part, I can't see what a reasonable fellow ought to expect before marriage, but ill usage.—You can't imagine, my dear, how it sweetens kindness afterwards—for, take my word for't, there's no charm like cruelty, to keep the men constant; nor no deformity like kindness, to make them loath you.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. A letter for your ladyship, madam. [*Exit.*

Ros. For me? I don't remember the hand.

[*Opens, and reads the Letter to herself.*

Fid. I have little inclination to be cheerful, though I sing songs, and prattle through the whole day—Belmont! Belmont! [*Aside.*]——You seem strangely concerned, madam—I hope no ill news?

Ros. The worst in the world, Fidelia, if it be true.

Fid. 'Pray Heaven it be false, then!—But must it be a secret?—I hope, my dear Rosetta knows, that whatever affects her quiet, can't leave mine undisturbed?

Ros. Who's there?

Enter SERVANT.

How did you receive this letter?

Serv. From a porter, madam.

Ros. Is he without?

Serv. No, madam; he said it required no answer.

Ros. Had you any knowledge of him?

Serv. Not that I remember, madam.

Ros. Should you know him again?

Serv. Certainly, madam.

Ros. Where did my brother say he dined to-day?

Serv. At the King's Arms, madam.

Ros. And Mr. Faddle with him?

Serv. They went out together, madam.

Ros. Run this moment, and say I desire to speak with both of them immediately, upon an extraordinary affair.

Serv. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Fid. What can this mean, Rosetta?—Am I unfit to be trusted?

Ros. Tell me, Fidelia—But no matter—Why should I disturb you!—I have been too grave.

Fid. Still more and more perplexing!—But my inquiries are at an end—I shall learn to be less troublesome, as you are less kind, Rosetta.

Ros. Pr'ythee, don't talk so, Fidelia—I can never be less kind.

Fid. Indeed, I won't deserve you should.

Ros. I know it, Fidelia.—But tell me, then—is there a circumstance in your life, that would call a blush to your cheeks, if 'twere laid as open to the world's knowledge, as to your own?

Fid. If from the letter you ask me that strange question, madam, surely I should see it.

Ros. I think not, Fidelia——For, upon second thoughts, 'tis a trifle, not worth your notice.

Fid. Why were you so much alarmed, then?

Ros. I confess, it startled me at first—but 'tis a lying letter, and should not trouble you.

Fid. Then it relates to me, madam?

Ros. No matter, Fidelia.

Fid. I have lost my friend, then—I begged, at first, to be a sharer in Rosetta's griefs—but now I find they are all my own, and she denies my right to them.

Ros. This is too much, Fidelia—And now, to keep you longer in suspense would be cruelty.—But the writer of this scroll has a mind darker than night.—You shall join with me in wondering, that there is such a monster in the world. [*Reads.*

To MISS ROSETTA BELMONT.

Madam,

As I write without a name, I am alike indifferent to your thanks or resentment.—Fidelia is not what she seems—She has deceived you, and may your brother, to his ruin. Women of the town know how to wear the face of innocence, when it serves the purposes of guilt. —Faddle, if he pleases, can inform you farther—But, be assured, I have my intelligence from more sufficient authority.

P. S. There needs no farther address in this matter, than a plain question to Fidelia—Is she the sister of Mr. Belmont's friend?

Fid. Then I am lost! [*Aside.*

Ros. What, in tears, Fidelia?——Nay, I meant to raise your contempt only—Pr'ythee, look up, and let us laugh at the malice of this nameless libeller.

Fid. No, Rosetta—The mind must be wrapped in its own innocence, that can stand against the storms of malice—I fear I have not that mind.

Ros. What mind, Fidelia?

Fid. And yet that letter is a false one.

Ros. Upon my life, it is—For you are innocence itself.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta!—No sister of Mr. Belmont's friend kneels to you for pardon—but a poor wretched outcast of fortune, that, with an artful tale, has imposed upon your nature, and won you to a friendship for a helpless stranger, that never knew herself.

Ros. Rise, Fidelia—But take care!—For, if you have deceived me, honesty is nothing but a name.

Fid. Think not too hardly of me neither—For, though I am not what I seem, I would not be what that letter calls me, to be mistress of the world.

Ros. I have no words, Fidelia—Speak on——But methinks you should not weep so.

Fid. Nay, now, Rosetta, you compel me—For this gentleness is too much for me—I have deceived you, and you are kind—If you would dry up my tears, call forth your resentment—Anger might turn me into stone—but compassion melts me.

Ros. I have no anger, Fidelia—Pray, go on.

Fid. When my tears will let me—I have played a foolish game, Rosetta—and yet my utmost fault has been consenting to deceive you.—What I am, I know not—That I am not what I seem, I know.—But why I have seemed otherwise than I am, again I know not.—'Tis a riddle that your brother only can explain.—He knows the story of my life, and will in honour reveal it. 'Would he were here!

Ros. 'Would he were, Fidelia!—for I am upon the rack—Pr'ythee, go on, and inform me farther.

Fid. There's my grief, Rosetta—For I am bound by such promises to silence, that, to clear my innocence, would be to wound it.—All I have left to say, is, that my condition of life only has been assumed, my virtue never.

Enter SERVANT.

Ros. Well, sir!

Serv. Mr. Belmont, madam, was just gone; but Mr. Faddle will wait upon your ladyship immediately.

Ros. Did they say where my brother went?

Serv. They did not know.——Mr. Faddle is here, madam. [*Exit.*

Enter FADDLE, *humming a Tune.*

Faddle. In obedience to your extraordinary commands, madam——But you should have been alone, child.

Ros. No trifling, sir——Do you know this hand-writing? [*Gives him the Letter.*

Faddle. Hum!—Not I, as I hope to be saved.—Nor you neither, I believe. [*Aside.*]—Is it for my perusal, madam?

Fid. And your answering too, sir.

Faddle. Mighty well, madam! [*Reads.*] Hum!—*Fidelia—Women—of the town—Innocence—Guilt—Faddle inform you farther!*——Why, what a plague am I brought in for?——*Intelligence—Question—Fidelia—Sister of Mr. Belmont's friend.*

[*Stares and whistles.*

Ros. Well, sir! [*Takes the Letter.*

Faddle. Oh!—I am to guess at the writer—Can't, upon my soul—Upon my soul, I can't, child.—'Tis a woman, I believe, though, by the damned blabbing that's in't.

Fid. The letter says, sir, that you can inform this lady farther concerning me.—Now, sir, whatever you happen to know, or to have heard, of me, deliver it freely, and without disguise.—I entreat it, as an act of friendship, that will for ever oblige me.

Faddle. Let me see——No——It can't be her neither——She is a woman of too much honour—and yet, I don't remember to have opened my lips about it, to any soul but her.

Fid. You know me, then, sir?

Ros. Speak out, sir.

Faddle. Methinks, if these letter-writers were a little more communicative of their own names, and less so of their neighbours', there would be more honesty in them.—Why am I introduced here!—Truly, forsooth, because a certain person in the world is overburdened with the secrets of her own slips; and, for a little vent, chuses to blab those of another—Faddle inform you farther!—Faddle will be damned as soon.

Ros. Hark you, sir—If you intend to enter these doors again, tell me all you know, for I will have it. You have owned your telling it elsewhere, sir.

Fid. What is it you told, sir?

Faddle. What I shan't tell here, madam. Her angry ladyship must excuse me, 'faith.

Fid. Indeed, Rosetta, he knows nothing.

Faddle. Nothing in the world, madam, as I hope to be saved. Mine is all hearsay. And, curse upon them! the whole town may be in a lie, for any thing I know. So they said of Lady Bridget, that she went off with her footman; but 'twas all slander, for 'twas a horse grenadier, that she bought a commission for last week.

Ros. What has Lady Bridget, or the town, to do with Fidelia, sir?

Faddle. So I said, madam—the very words. Says I, a woman of the town? Does a slip or two with particulars make a lady a woman of the town? Or, if it did, says I, many a one has taken up, and lived honestly afterwards. A woman of the town, indeed!

Fid. Hold your licentious tongue, sir! Upon my life, Rosetta, 'tis all malice. 'Tis his own contrivance. I dare him to produce another villain, that's base enough to say this of me.

Faddle. Right, madam! Stick to that, and, 'egad, I'll be of your side. [*Aloud in her Ear.*

Fid. Insolence! [*Strikes him.*] Oh, I am hurt beyond all bearing!

Ros. And I, lost in perplexity. If thou art linked with any wretch base enough to contrive this paper, or art thyself the contriver, may poverty and a bad heart be thy companions: but if thou art privy to any thing, that concerns the honour of this family, give it breath, and I'll insure thee both protection and reward.

Fid. I dare him to discovery.

Faddle. Ladies, I have had the honour of a blow conferred on me by one of you, and am favoured with the offer of protection and reward from the other; now, to convince both, that, in spite of indignities, or obligations, I can keep a secret, if ever I open my lips upon this matter, may plague, famine, and the horned devil, consume and seize me. And so, ladies, I take my leave. [*Exit, singing.*

Ros. What can this fellow mean, Fidelia! Has he not abused you?

Fid. Is it a doubt, then? 'Would I had leave to speak!

Ros. And why not, Fidelia? Promises unjustly extorted, have no right to observance. You have deceived me by your own acknowledgment, and, methinks, at such a time, matters of punctilio should give place to reason and necessity.

Fid. I dare not, Rosetta. 'Twould be a crime to your brother, and I owe him more than all the world.

Ros. And what are those obligations, Fidelia?

Fid. Not for me to mention. Indeed, I dare not, Rosetta.

Ros. 'Tis well, madam! And when you are inclined to admit me to your confidence, I shall perhaps know better how to conduct myself. [*Going.*

Enter YOUNG BELMONT.

Oh, are you come, brother! Your friend's sister, your ward there, has wanted you, sir.

Bel. What is it, Fidelia?

Fid. I have no breath to speak it. Your sister, sir, can better inform you.

Ros. Read that, sir.

[*Gives him the Letter, which he reads to himself.*

Fid. Now, Rosetta, all shall be set right. Your brother will do me justice, and account for his own *conduct.*

Ros. I expect so, Fidelia.

Bel. Impertinent! [*Gives back the Letter.*] I met Faddle as I came in; and, I suppose, in pure love of mischief, he has made my believing sister, here, a convert to the villany of that letter. But I'll make the rascal unsay every thing he has said, or his bones shall ache for't. [*Going.*

Fid. Stay, sir, I entreat you. That I am a counterfeit, in part, I have already confessed——

Bel. You have done wrong, then.

Fid. But am I a creature of the town, sir? Your sister must learn that from you. You have been once my deliverer—be so now. Tell her, I am poor and miserable, but not dishonest. That I have only consented to deceive her, not desired it. Tell her, I deserve her pity, not her anger. 'Tis my only request. Can you deny it me?

Bel. You have said too much, Fidelia. And, for your own sake, I shall forbear to mention what I know of your story. How far your own honour is bound, you are the best judge. But a breach of the most solemn promises, let me tell you, madam, will be a wretched vindication of the innocence you contend for.

Fid. And is this all, sir?

Bel. For my own part, I must have better authority than Faddle, or a nameless writer, to believe any thing to your dishonour. And for you, sister, I must not have this lady ill treated. While I am satisfied of her innocence, your suspicions are impertinent. Nor will I consent to her removal, madam, mark that, whatever you, in your great wisdom, may have privately determined. [*Exit.*

Ros. You are a villain, brother.

Fid. Now I have lost you, Rosetta!

Ros. When you incline to be a friend to yourself, Fidelia, you may find one in me. But while explanations are avoided, I must be allowed to act from

my own opinion, and agreeable to the character I am to support. [*Exit.*

Fid. Then I am wretched! But that's no novelty. I have wandered from my cradle, the very child of misfortune. To retire and weep, must now be my only indulgence. [*Exit.*

Enter YOUNG BELMONT.

Bel. Why, what a rogue am I! Here have I thrown a whole family, and that my own too, into perplexities, that innocence can't oppose, nor cunning guard against. And all for what? Why, a woman!—Take away that excuse, and the devil himself would be a saint to me; for all the rest is sinning without temptation. In my commerce with the world, I am guarded against the mercenary vices.—I think, I have honour above lying, courage above cruelty, pride above meanness, and honesty above deceit; and yet, throw but coy beauty in my way, and all the vices, by turns, take possession of me. Fortune, fortune, give me success this once—and I'll build churches!

Enter FADDLE.

Faddle. What, Charles!—Is the coast clear, and the finishing stroke given to my embassy, hah?

Bel. Thou hast been a most excellent rascal, and, 'faith, matters seem to be in a promising condition. For I have flung that in Rosetta's way, which, if she keeps her womanhood, will do the business.

Faddle. Pr'ythee, what's that, Charles?

Bel. Why, I have bid her not to think of parting with Fidelia.

Faddle. Nay, then, tip she goes headlong out at window. But hast thou no bowels, Charles? for, methinks, I begin to feel some twitches of compunction about me.

Bel. I understand you, sir; but I have no more *purses.*

Faddle. Why, look you, Charles, we must find a way to lull this conscience of mine—here will be the devil to do else. That's a very pretty ring, Charles.

Bel. Is it so, sir? Hark you, Mr. Dog, if you demur one moment to fetching and carrying in this business, as I bid you, you shall find my hand a little heavy upon you.

Faddle. Pugh, pox, Charles! can't a body speak? People may be in good humour, when they want people to do things for people, methinks.

Bel. Troop this moment, with your rascally conscience, to the King's Arms, and wait there till I come, sir.

Faddle. Why, so I will, Charles——A plague of the swaggering son of a——Not so big neither, if one had but a little courage. [*Aside, and going.*

Bel. Hark you, Faddle—Now I think on't, there is a way yet for thee to make another purse out of this business.

Faddle. Why, one would not be a rogue for nothing, methinks.

Bel. I saw Sir Charles going into Fidelia's chamber—thou may'st steal upon them unobserved—they'll have their plots too, I suppose.

Faddle. And where am I to come and tell thee, hah?

Bel. At the King's Arms, boy.

Faddle. But you'll remember the purse, Charles?

Bel. Softly, rascal! [*Exit* FADDLE.] Why, there it is again now! I am a fellow of principle! and so I will be, some time or other. But these appetites are the devil, and at present I am under their direction.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

SIR CHARLES RAYMOND *and* FIDELIA *discovered sitting.*

Sir C. He durst not say, directly, you were that creature the letter called!

Fid. Not in terms, sir; but his concealments struck deeper than the sharpest accusations.

Sir C. And could Mr. Belmont be silent to all this?

Fid. He said he had his reasons, sir, and it was my part to submit. I had no heart to disoblige him.

Sir C. You are too nice, madam. Rosetta loves you, and should be trusted.

Fid. Alas, sir! if it concerned me only, I should have no concealment.

Sir C. It concerns you most, madam. I must deal plainly with you. You have deceived your friend; and, though I believe it not, a severer reproach rests upon you. And shall an idle promise, an extorted one too, and that from a man who solicits your undoing, forbid your vindication? You must think better of it.

Fid. 'Tis not an extorted promise, sir, that seals my lips—but I love him—and, though he pursues me to my ruin, I will obey him in this, whatever happens. He may desert me, but never shall have reason to upbraid me.

Sir C. 'Tis your own cause, madam, and you must act in it as you think proper. Yet still, if I might *advise*——

Fid. Leave it to time, Sir Charles. And if you believe me innocent, your friendly thoughts of me, and my own conscience, shall keep me cheerful.

Enter FADDLE, *listening.*

Faddle. O, plague, is it so! Now for a secret worth twenty pieces!

Sir C. Has it ever appeared to you, madam, that Faddle was a confidant of Mr. Belmont's?

Fid. Never, sir. On the contrary, a wretch most heartily despised by him.

Faddle. If she should be a little mistaken now! [*Aside.*

Sir C. Can you guess at any other means of his coming to a knowledge of you?

Fid. None that I know of, sir.

Faddle. 'Faith, I believe her. [*Aside.*

Sir C. One question more, madam, and I have done. Did Mr. Belmont ever solicit your removing from this house?

Fid. Never directly, sir. He has often, when we have been alone, quarrelled with himself for bringing me into it.

Sir C. I thank you, madam. And if my inquiries have been at any time too importunate, allow them to the warmth of an honest friendship; for I have a heart that feels for your distresses, and beats to relieve them.

Fid. I have no words, Sir Charles; let my tears thank you.

Sir C. Be composed, my child. And if Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you, with such welcome, as virtue should find with one who loves it.

Fid. Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with—for this goodness is too much for me.

Faddle. And so she's a bit for the old gentleman at last! Rare news for Charles! or, with a little addition, I shall make it so. But I must decamp, to avoid danger. [*Aside, and exit.*

Sir C. Dry up your tears, Fidelia. For, if my conjectures are well grounded, before night, perhaps, something may be done to serve you. And so I leave you to your best thoughts. [*Exit.*

Fid. Then I have one friend left. How long I am to hold him, Heaven knows! 'Tis a fickle world, and nothing in it is lasting, but misfortune—yet I'll have patience:

That sweet relief, the healing hand of Heav'n
Alone to suff'ring innocence has giv'n;
Come, friend of virtue, balm of every care,
Dwell in my bosom, and forbid despair. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment.

Enter COLONEL RAYMOND *and* ROSETTA.

Ros. I tell you, I will not be talked to.

Ray. 'Tis my unhappiness, madam, to raise no passion in you, but anger.

Ros. You are mistaken, Colonel. I am not angry, though I answer so. My gaiety has been disturbed to-day; and gravity always sits upon me like ill humour. Fidelia has engrossed me, and you are talking of yourself. What would you have me say?

Ray. That your neglect of me has been dissembled, and that I have leave to love you, and to hope for you.

Ros. This is very strange now! Why, 'tis not in your power to avoid loving me, whether you have leave to hope or not. And as to my dissembling, I know nothing of that—all I know is, that I'm a woman; and women, I suppose, dissemble sometimes—I don't pretend to be a bit better than a woman.

Ray. Be a kind one, and you're an angel.

Ros. But if I were inclined to listen, what have you to say in favour of matrimony?

Ray. 'Tis happiness, or misery, as minds are differently disposed. The necessary requisites are, love, good sense, and good breeding. The first to unite, the second to advise, and the third to comply. If you add to these, neatness and competency, beauty will always please, and family cares become agreeable amusements.

Ros. Do you know, now, that you never pleased me so much in all your life?

Ray. If so, Rosetta, one question, and then to apply.

Ros. How if I should not answer your question?

Ray. 'Tis a fair one, upon my word. Don't you think, that you and I could muster up these requisites between us?

Ros. Let me consider a little——Who must have love, pray?

Ray. Both of us.

Ros. No, I have no mind to have any thing to do with love. *Do you* take that, and give understand-

ing, to advise. So then you choose, and have all the good breeding, for compliance; then I neatness; and last of all, competency shall be divided between us.

Ray. A match, madam, upon your own terms.—But if ever you should take it into your head to dispute love with me, what other requisite are you willing to give up for it?

Ros. Why, neatness, I think; 'tis of little use to a married woman, you know.

Ray. A trifle, madam. But when are we to come together?

Ros. As soon as we can give proof that these ingredients are between us—In a few years, perhaps.

Ray. If our virtues should starve in that time?

Ros. Pshaw!—You know nothing of the matter. Sense will improve every day, and love and good-breeding live an age, if we don't marry then. But we'll have done with these matters; for I can keep the ball up no longer. You did not say Fidelia upbraided me?

Ray. The very reverse. 'Twas her only affliction, she said, that you had reason to think hardly of her.

Ros. Poor girl! If you would make love to me with success, colonel, clear up these perplexities.—Suppose I was to dismiss my pride a little, and make her a visit with you?

Ray. 'Twould be a kind one.

Ros. Lead on then; for, in spite of my resentments, I have no heart to keep from her. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter YOUNG BELMONT *and* FADDLE.

Bel. If this should be invention, Faddle?

Faddle. I tell thee, I was behind the screen, and heard every syllable on't. Why, I'll say it to his face, pr'ythee.

Bel. What, that he proposed to take her into keeping, and that she consented?

Faddle. Not in those words, man—No, no, Sir Charles is a gentleman of politer elocution. Pray, child, says he, did Young Belmont ever propose your removing from this house? No, sir, says she, but he has cursed himself to damnation for bringing me into it. [*Mimicking* SIR CHARLES *and* FIDELIA.] Well, child, says he, the thing may be done to-night; apartments are ready for you. And then, in a lower voice, he said something about virtue, that I could not very well hear; but I saw it set the girl a crying. And presently, in answer to a whisper of his, I heard her say, in a very pretty manner, that she thought it was too much for her. But what his proposals were, the devil a syllable could I hear.

Bel. Ha! ha!—Yonder he is, Faddle, and coming this way. We must not be seen together.

Faddle. For a little sport, Charles, suppose I fling myself in his way, and make interest to be commode to him, ha!

Bel. And get thy nose twisted for thy pains?

Faddle. Why, I can run, if I can't fight.

Bel. 'Faith, I never doubted thee that way. I'll to my room, then, and wait for thee.

Faddle. But leave the door open, Charles.

Bel. Ha! ha! ha!—You'll not be tedious, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND.

Faddle. If the old gentleman should be in his airs though—Servant, servant, Sir Charles.

Sir C. Oh, sir, you are the man I was looking for!

Faddle. If I can be of any service, Sir Charles—— What, and so—ha!——'Faith, you're a sly one—But you old poachers have such a way with you?—Why here has Charles been racking his brains for ways and means, any time these three months; and just in the nick, souse comes me down the old kite—and, alack-a-day, poor chick!—the business is done.

Sir C. Make yourself a little intelligible, sir.

Faddle. And so, I don't speak plain, ha?—Oh, the little rogue!—There's more beauty in the veins of her neck, than in a landscape of Claude; and more music in the smack of her lips, than in all Handel!

Sir C. Let me understand you, sir.

Faddle. Methinks 'twas very laconic, though—— If Rosetta's suspicions grow violent, I have apartments ready to receive you. [*Mimicking* SIR CHARLES.] But a word in your ear, old gentleman—Those apartments won't do.

Sir C. Oh, sir, I begin to be a little in the secret!

Faddle. Mighty quick of apprehension, 'faith!—And the little innocent!——Still, Sir Charles, my tears are all that I can thank you with; for this goodness is too much for me. [*Mimicking* FIDELIA.] Upon my soul, you have a great deal of goodness, Sir Charles; a great deal of goodness, upon my soul!

Sir C. Why, now I understand you, sir. And as these matters may require time, for the sake of privacy, *we'll shut this door.* [*Shuts the Door.*

Faddle. Any other time, Sir Charles. But I am really so hurried at present, that—Oh, lord! [*Aside.*

Sir C. Why, what does the wretch tremble at?—Broken bones are to be set again; and thou mayest yet die in thy bed. [*Takes hold of him.*] You have been a listener, sir.

Faddle. Lord, sir!—Indeed, sir!—Not I, sir!

Sir C. No denial, sir. [*Shakes him.*

Faddle. Oh, sir, I'll confess! I did listen, sir——I did, indeed, sir.

Sir C. Does your memory furnish you with any other villany of yours, that may save me the trouble of an explanation?

Faddle. I'll think, sir——What the devil shall I say now? [*Aside.*

Sir C. Take care; for every lie thou tellest me, shall be scored ten fold upon thy flesh. Answer me ——How came Mr. Belmont's sister by that anonymous letter?

Faddle. Letter, sir!

Sir C. Whence came it, I say?

Faddle. Is there no remission, sir?

Sir C. None that thou canst deserve: for honesty is not in thy nature.

Faddle. If I confess?

Sir C. Do so then, and trust me,

Faddle. Yes, and so be beat to a mummy by Charles—If you won't tell him, sir——

Sir C. I'll think on't.

Faddle. Why then, sir——But he'll certainly be the death of me——It was by his contrivance I wrote the letter, and sent it from the King's Arms.

Sir C. Very well, sir. And did you know to what purpose it was sent?

Faddle. Yes, sir; it was to alarm the family against Fidelia, that Charles might get her into private lodgings——That was all, as I hope to be saved, sir!

Sir C. Was it, sir? And upon what principles were you an accomplice in this villany?

Faddle. I was out of money, sir, and not over-valiant; and Charles promised and threatened—'Twas either a small purse, or a great cudgel—And so, I took the one, to avoid t'other, sir.

Sir C. And what dost thou deserve for this?

Faddle. 'Pray, sir, consider my honest confession, and think me paid already, if you please, sir.

Sir C. For that thou art safe. If thou wouldst continue so, avoid me. Begone, I say!

Faddle. Yes, sir——and well off too, 'faith.

[*Aside, and going.*

Sir C. Yet stay—If thou art open to any sense of shame, hear me.

Faddle. I will, sir.

Sir C. Thy life is a disgrace to humanity. A foolish prodigality makes thee needy: need makes thee vicious, and both make thee contemptible. Thy wit is prostituted to slander and buffoonery; and thy judgments, if thou hast any, to meanness and villany. Thy betters, that laugh with thee, laugh at thee: and who are they? The fools of quality at court, and those who ape them in the city. The varieties of thy life are pitiful rewards, and painful abuses; for the same trick that gets thee a guinea to-day, shall get thee beaten out of doors to-morrow. Those who caress thee are enemies to themselves; and when they know it, will be so to thee: in thy distresses they'll desert thee, and leave thee, at last, to sink in thy poverty unregarded and unpitied. If thou canst be wise, think of me, and be honest. [*Exit.*

Faddle. I'll endeavour it, sir——A most excellent discourse, 'faith; and mighty well there was not a larger congregation.——So, so!—I must be witty, with a vengeance!——What the devil shall I say to Charles, now?—And here he comes, like poverty and

the plague, to destroy me at once—Let me see—Ay—as truth has saved me with one, I'll try what a little lying will do with t'other.

Enter YOUNG BELMONT.

Ha! ha! ha! Oh, the rarest sport, Charles!

Bel. What sport, pr'ythee?

Faddle. I shall burst!—Ha! ha! ha!—The old gentleman has let me into all his secrets!

Bel. And, like a faithful confidant, you are going to reveal them.

Faddle. Not a breath, Charles—Only that I am in commission, my dear, that's all.

Bel. So I suppose, indeed.

Faddle. Nay, Charles, if I tell thee a lie, cut my throat. The short of the matter is, the old poacher, finding me in the secret, thought it the wisest way to make a confidant of me; and this very moment, my dear, I am upon the wing to provide lodgings for the occasion.

Bel. If this should be apocryphal, as my father says——

Faddle. Gospel every syllable, as I hope to be saved—Why, what in the devil's name have I to do, to be inventing lies for thee?—But here comes the old gentleman again, 'faith—Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*]—Pr'ythee, stroke him down a little, Charles, if 'tis only to see how awkward he takes it—I must about the lodgings, ha! ha! ha!—But if ever I set foot in this house again, may a horse-pond be my portion!

[*Aside, and exit.*

Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND, *with a Letter in his Hand, speaking to a* SERVANT.

Sir C. Bid him wait a little, and I'll attend him. [*Exit* SERVANT.] What can this mean?—Let me read it again. [*Reads.*] *If the interest of* Sir Charles Raymond's *family be dear to him, he will* follow the bearer

with the same haste that he would shun ruin.——That he would shun ruin! This is strange! But, be it as it will, I have another concern that must take place first.

Bel. Sir Charles, your servant. Any news, sir?

Sir C. Not much, sir; only, that a young gentleman of honour and condition had introduced a virtuous lady to his family; and, when a worthless fellow defamed her innocence, and robbed her of her quiet, he, who might have dried her tears, and vindicated her virtue, forsook her in her injuries, to debauch his mind with the assassin of her reputation.

Bel. If your tale ends there, sir, you have learned but half on't; for my advices add, that a certain elderly gentleman, of title and fortune, pitying the forlorn circumstances of the lady, has offered her terms of friendship and accommodation; and this night she bids farewell to maidenhood, and a female bedfellow, in private apartments.

Sir C. You treat me lightly, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. You use me roughly, Sir Charles.

Sir C. How, sir?

Bel. In the person of Fidelia.

Sir C. Make it appear, and you shall find me a very boy in my submissions.

Bel. 'Twould be time lost; and I can employ it to advantage. But remember, sir, that this house is another's, not yours; that Fidelia is under my direction, not yours; and that my will must determine her removal, not yours.

Sir C. Is she your slave, sir, to bear the burden of your insults without complaining, or the right of chusing another master?

Bel. And who shall be that master? You, sir? The poor bird, that would escape the kite, is like to find warm protection from the fox!

Sir C. Pr'ythee, think me a man, and treat me as *such.*

Bel. As the man I have found you, Sir Charles. Your grave deportment, and honesty of heart, are covers only for wantonness and design. You preach up temperance and sobriety to youth, to monopolize, in age, the vices you are unfit for.

Sir C. Hark you, young man—you must curb this impetuous spirit of yours, or I shall be tempted to teach you manners, in a method disagreeable to you.

Bel. Learn them first yourself, sir. You say Fidelia is insulted by me; how is it made out? Why, truly, I would possess her without marriage!——I would so. Marriage is the thing I would avoid: 'tis the trick of priests, to make men miserable, and women insolent. I have dealt plainly, and told her so. Have you said as much? No; you wear the face of honesty, to quiet her fears; that, when your blood boils, and security has stolen away her guard, you may rush at midnight upon her beauties, and do the ravage you have sworn to protect her from.

Sir C. Hold, sir. You have driven me beyond the limits of my patience; and I must tell you, young man, that the obligations I owe your father, demand no returns that manhood must blush to make. Therefore, hold, I say; for I have a sword to do me justice, though it should leave my dearest friend childless.

Bel. I fear it not.

Sir C. Better tempt it not; for your fears may come too late. You have dealt openly with Fidelia, you say: deal so for once with me, and tell me, whence came that vile scroll to Rosetta this afternoon.

Bel. It seems, then, I wrote it. You dare not think so.

Sir C. I dare speak, as well as think, where honour directs me.

Bel. You are my accuser, then?

Sir C. When I become so, I shall take care, Mr. Belmont, that the proof waits upon the accusation.

Bel. I disdain the thought.

Sir C. Better have disdained the deed.

Bel. I do both—and him that suspects me.

Sir C. Away! You fear him that suspects you; and have disdained neither the thought nor the deed.

Bel. How, sir? [*Drawing.*

Sir C. Put up your sword, young man, and use it in a better cause: this is a vile one. And now you shall be as still through shame, as you have been loud through pride. You should have known, that cowards are unfit for secrets.

Bel. And if I had, sir?

Sir C. Why, then, sir, you had not employed such a wretch as Faddle, to write that letter to Rosetta.

Bel. The villain has betrayed me! But I'll be sure on't. [*Aside.*] He durst not say I did!

Sir C. You should rather have built your innocence upon the probability of his unsaying it; for the same fear that made him confess to me, may make him deny every syllable to you.

Bel. What has he confessed, sir?

Sir C. That, to-day, at dinner, you prompted the letter that he wrote. That your design was, by vilifying Fidelia, to get her dismissed, and the dismission to prepare her ruin in private lodgings. Was this your open behaviour, sir?

Bel. Go on with your upbraidings, sir. Speak to me as you will, and think of me as you will. I have deserved shame, and am taught patience.

Sir C. Was this well done? Did her innocence, and her undissembled love, deserve this treatment?

Bel. Proceed, sir.

Sir C. No, sir, I have done. If you have sense of your past conduct, you want not humanity to heal

the wounds it has given. Something must be done, and speedily.

Bel. What reparation can I make her?

Sir C. Dry up her tears, by an immediate acknowledgment of her wrongs.

Bel. I would do more.

Sir C. Bid her farewell, then, and consent to her removal.

Bel. I cannot, sir.

Sir C. Her peace demands it: but we'll talk of that hereafter. If you have honour, go and do her justice, and undeceive your abused sister. Who waits there?—Indeed, you have been to blame, Mr. Belmont.

Enter SERVANT.

Show me to the bearer of this letter.

[*Exit, with the* SERVANT.

Bel. Why, what a thing am I!—But 'tis the trick of vice, to pay her votaries with shame; and I am rewarded amply. To be a fool's fool too! to link myself in villany with a wretch below the notice of a man! and to be outwitted by him!—So, so!—I may have abused Sir Charles too—Let me think a little—I'll to Fidelia instantly, and tell her what a rogue I have been. But will that be reparation?—I know but of one way; and there my pride stops me—And then I lose her—Worse and worse!—I'll think no more on't; but away to her chamber, and bid her think for me.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in SIR ROBERT BELMONT'S *House.*

Enter SIR ROBERT BELMONT *and* SERVANT. SIR ROBERT *with a Letter in his Hand.*

Sir R. Very fine doings, indeed! But I'll teach the dog to play his tricks upon his father. A man had better let a lion loose in his family, than a town-rake. Where is Sir Charles, I say?

Serv. This moment come in, sir.

Sir R. And why did not you say so, blockhead? Tell him I must speak with him this moment.

Serv. The servant says, he waits for an answer to that letter, sir.

Sir R. Do as I bid you, rascal, and let him wait. Fly, I say! [*Exit* SERVANT.]—The riotous young dog! to bring his harlots home with him! But I'll outwit the baggage.

Enter SIR CHARLES RAYMOND.

Oh, Sir Charles, 'tis every word as we said this morning! The boy has stolen her, and I am to be ruined by a law-suit.

Sir C. A law-suit! with whom, sir?

Sir R. Read, read, read! [Gives the Letter.

Sir C. [Reads.] *I am guardian to that Fidelia, whom your son has stolen from me, and you unjustly detain. If you deny her to me, the law shall right me. I wait your answer by the bearer, to assert my claim in the person of* GEORGE VILLIARD.

Why, then, my doubts are at an end. But I must conceal my transports, and wear a face of coolness, while my heart overflows with passion. [*Aside.*

Sir R. What, not a word, Sir Charles?—There's a piece of work for you!—And so I am to be ruined!

Sir C. Do you know this Villiard, Sir Robert?

Sir R. Whether I do or not, sir, the slut shall go to him this moment.

Sir C. Hold a little. This gentleman must be heard, sir; and, if his claim be good, the lady restored.

Sir R. Why, e'en let her go as it is, Sir Charles.

Sir C. That would be too hasty. Go in with me, sir, and we'll consider how to write to him.

Sir R. Well, well, well——I wish she was gone, though. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter YOUNG BELMONT *and* FIDELIA.

Bel. Ask me not why I did it, but forgive me.

Fid. No, sir, 'tis impossible. I have a mind, Mr. Belmont, above the wretchedness of my fortune; and, helpless as I am, I can feel in this breast a sense of injuries, and spirit to resent them.

Bel. *Nay, but hear me, Fidelia.*

Fid. Was it not enough to desert me in my distresses, to deny me the poor request I made you, but must you own yourself the contriver of that letter? 'Tis insupportable! If I consented to assume a rank that belonged not to me, my heart went not with the deceit. You would have it so, and I complied. 'Twas shame enough, that I had deceived your sister; it needed not that I should bring a prostitute to her friendship. This was too much, too much, Mr. Belmont.

Bel. Yet hear me, I say.

Fid. And then, to leave me to the malice of that wretch; to have my supposed infamy the tavern jest of his licentious companions!—I never flattered myself, Mr. Belmont, with your love; but knew not, till now, that I have been the object of your hatred.

Bel. My hatred! But I have deserved your hardest thoughts of me.—And yet, believe me, Fidelia, when I used you worst, I loved you most.

Fid. Call it by another name; for love delights in acts of kindness—Were yours such, sir?—And yet, must I forget all; for I owe you more than injuries can cancel, or gratitude repay.

Bel. Generous creature! This is to be amiable indeed! But, must we part, Fidelia?

Fid. I have resolved it, sir, and you must yield to it.

Bel. Never, my sweet obstinate.

Fid. That I have loved you, 'tis my pride to acknowledge; but that must be forgot. And the hard task remains, to drive the passion from my breast, while I cherish the memory of your humane offices. This day, then, shall be the last of our meeting. Painful though it may be, yet your own, mine, and the family's peace, requires it. Heaven, in my distresses, has not left me destitute of a friend; or, if it had, I *can find one* in my innocence, to make even poverty *supportable.*

Bel. You have touched me, Fidelia; and my heart yields to your virtues. Here, then, let my follies have an end; and thus let me receive you as the everlasting partner of my heart and fortune.

[*Offers to embrace her.*

Fid. No, sir. The conduct, that has hitherto secured my own honour, shall protect yours. I have been the innocent disturber of your family; but never will consent to load it with disgrace.

Bel. Nor can it be disgraced. I mean to honour it, Fidelia: you must comply.

Fid. And repay generosity with ruin! No, Mr. Belmont; I can forego happiness, but never can consent to make another miserable.

Bel. When I repent, Fidelia;—But, see, where my sister comes, to be an advocate for my wishes!

Enter ROSETTA.

Ros. Oh, sir, you are found! You have done nobly indeed! But your thefts are discovered, sir.—— This lady's guardian has a word or two for you.

Bel. Her guardian? Upon my life, Fidelia, Villiard! He comes as I could wish him.

Ros. Say so when you have answered him, brother. Am I to lose you at last then, Fidelia? And yet my hopes flatter me, that this too, as well as the letter, is a deceit.—May I think so, Fidelia?

Fid. As truly as of your goodness, Rosetta.—— Your brother will tell you all. Oh, he has made me miserable by his generosity!

Bel. This pretended guardian, sister, is a villain, and Fidelia, the most abused of women! Bounteous he has been indeed: but to his vices, not his virtues, she stands indebted for the best of educations. The story will amaze you. At twelve years old——

Ros. He's here, brother, and with him, my papa, Sir Charles, and the colonel. Now, Fidelia,

Enter SIR ROBERT BELMONT, SIR CHARLES RAYMOND, COLONEL RAYMOND *and* VILLIARD.

Sir C. If that be the lady, Mr. Villiard, and your claim as you pretend, Sir Robert has told you, she shall be restored sir.

Sir R. Yes, sir, and your claim as you pretend.

Vil. [*Going to* FIDELIA.] This, gentlemen, is the lady; and this, the robber, who stole her from me—[*Pointing to* BELMONT.] By violence, and at midnight, he stole her.

Bel. Stole her, sir!

Vil. By violence, and at midnight, I say.

Bel. You shall be heard, sir.

Vil. Ay, sir, and satisfied. I stand here, gentlemen, to demand my ward.

Sir C. Give us proofs, sir, and you shall have justice.

Vil. Demand them there, sir. [*Pointing to* BELMONT *and* FIDELIA.] I have told you, I am robbed: if you deny me justice, the law shall force it.

Sir C. A little patience, sir. [*To* VILLIARD.] Do you know this gentleman, Fidelia?

Fid. Too well, sir.

Sir C. By what means, sir, did you become her guardian? [*To* VILLIARD.

Vil. By the will of her who bore her, sir.

Sir C. How will you reply to this, Fidelia?

Fid. With truth and honesty, sir.

Bel. Let him proceed, madam.

Vil. Ay, sir, to your part of the story; though both are practised in a damned falsehood to confront me.

Bel. Falsehood?—But I am cool, sir. Proceed.

Vil. My doors were broken open at midnight, by this gentleman, [*Pointing to* BELMONT.] myself *wounded,* and Fidelia ravished from me. He ran off *with her in his arms.* Nor, till this morning, in a

coach which brought her hither, have my eyes ever beheld her.

Sir R. A very fine business, truly, young man! [*To* BELMONT.

Fid. He has abused you, sir. Mr. Belmont is noble——

Bel. No matter, Fidelia. Well, sir, you have been robbed, you say? [*To* VILLIARD.

Vil. And will have justice, sir.

Bel. Take it from this hand then. [*Drawing.*

Sir C. Hold, sir. This is adding insult to injuries. Fidelia must be restored, sir.

Sir R. Ay, sir, Fidelia must be restored.

Fid. But not to him. Hear but my story, and, if I deceive you, let your friendship forsake me. He bought me, gentlemen, for the worst of purposes; he bought me of the worst of women. A thousand times has he confessed it, and, as often, pleaded his right of purchase to undo me. Whole years have I endured his brutal solicitations; till, tired with entreaties, he had recourse to violence. This scene was laid, and I had been ruined beyond redress, had not my cries brought the generous Mr. Belmont to my relief. He was accidentally passing by, and, alarmed at midnight, by a woman's shrieks, he forced open the door, and saved me from destruction.

Sir C. How will you answer this, sir? [*To* VILLIARD.

Vil. 'Tis false, sir! That woman was her nurse;—these hands delivered her to her care.

Fid. Alas, gentlemen, she found me a helpless infant at her door! So she has always told me; and, at twelve years old, betrayed me to that monster.—— Search out the woman, if she be alive, and let me be confronted.

Sir R. If this be true, Sir Charles, I shall bless myself as long as I live, for getting my boy. [*Weeps.*

Vil. 'Tis false, I say!—a damned contrivance to

escape me. I stand here, sir, to demand my ward. [*To* SIR ROBERT.] Deny her to me, at your peril.

Bel. He shall have my life as soon.

Vil. Hark you, sir: [*To* SIR ROBERT.] There are things called laws, to do right to the injured. My appeal shall be to them.

Sir C. That woman must be produced, sir. [*To* VILLIARD.

Vil. And shall, sir, in a court of justice. Our next meeting shall be there. Till then, madam, you are secure. [*To* FIDELIA.

Bel. Take care that you are so, sir, when we have occasion to call upon you. You shall have justice.

Vil. And will, sir, in defiance of you. [*Exit.*

Sir C. Fear not, Fidelia; we believe, and will protect you.

Ros. My sweet girl!—But whence came the letter this afternoon?

Bel. 'Twas I that wrote it.

Ros. Oh, monstrous!—And could you be that wretch, brother?

Bel. And will atone for it, by the only recompense that's left me.

Sir R. And what recompense will you make her, ha, rogue?

Bel. I have injured her, sir, and must do her justice. If you would retrieve my honour, or promote my happiness, give me your consent, sir, to make her your daughter.

Ros. Why, that's my brother! Now, I am sure she's innocent. And so you will, papa.

Sir R. But, positively, I will not, child. Marry her, indeed! What! without a shilling, and be ruined by Villiard into the bargain? If your story be true, Fidelia, you shall be provided for: But no marrying, d'ye hear, child?

Fid. You need not doubt me, sir.

Sir R. Why, that's well said, Fidelia!

Ros. And deserves reward, sir. Pray, Sir Charles, let us have your thoughts upon this matter.

Sir C. Your brother's proposal, madam, and Fidelia's denial, are as generous, as your father's determination is just.

Bel. I expected as much, sir.

Sir C. My opinion was asked, sir.

Bel. And you have given it: I thank you, sir.

Sir C. Think of Villiard, Mr. Belmont; his claim may be renewed, sir.

Bel. Fidelia has deceived you then—You think otherwise, Sir Charles?

Ray. My life upon her innocence!—And where the fortune on one side is more than sufficient, how light is all addition to it, compared to the possession of her one loves!—Let me, sir, be happy in Rosetta, [*To* SIR ROBERT.] and give her fortune to Fidelia, to make her an object worthy of your son.

Ros. There's a colonel for you!—What says my sweet Fidelia?

Fid. I intended to be silent, madam; but 'tis now my duty to speak. You have been my deliverer, sir, from the worst of evils; [*To* BELMONT.] and now would nobly augment the first obligation by a generosity too mighty for acknowledgment. If I had the wealth of worlds, it would be too little to bestow.—But, poor and friendless as I am, my heart may break, but never shall consent to make my benefactor a penitent to his virtues.

Sir C. 'Tis nobly said, Fidelia!—And now, Mr. Belmont, our disputes will soon be at an end. You have this day, sir, reproached me often; it remains now, that you should know me as I am.

Bel. If I have erred, sir——

Sir C. Interrupt me not, but hear me. I have watched your follies with concern; and 'tis with equal pleasure I congratulate your return to honour. If I *have opposed* your generous inclinations, it was only

to give them strength.—I am now a suppliant to your father, for the happiness you desire.

Bel. This is noble, Sir Charles!

Sir C. And to make Fidelia worthy of his son, a fortune shall be added equal to his warmest expectations.

Sir R. Why, ay, Sir Charles, let that be made out, and I shall have no objections.

Fid. What mean you, sir? [*To* SIR CHARLES.

Sir C. A minute more, and my sweet girl shall be instructed. You have often told me, sir, [*To* BELMONT.] that I had an interest in this lovely creature. —I have an interest—an interest, that you shall allow me! My heart dotes upon her!—Oh, I can hold no longer!—My daughter! my daughter!

[*Running to* FIDELIA, *and embracing her.*

Fid. Your daughter, sir!

Sir C. Oh, my sweet child!—Sir Robert, Mr. Belmont, my son!—These tears—these tears!—Fidelia is my daughter!

Ray. Is't possible?

Sir C. Let not excess of wonder overpower you, Fidelia, for I have a tale to tell, that will exceed belief.

Fid. Oh, sir!

Sir C. Upbraid me not, that I have kept it a moment from your knowledge—'twas a hard trial; and while my tongue was taught dissimulation, my heart bled for a child's distresses.

Bel. Torture us not, sir, but explain this wonder.

Sir C. My tears must have their way first—Oh, my child! my child! [*Turning to* SIR ROBERT *and the rest.*] Know then, that wicked woman, so often mentioned, was my Fidelia's governante. When my mistaken zeal drove me into banishment, I left her, an infant, to her care—To secure some jewels of value *I had lodged* with her, she became the woman you *have heard*—My child was taught to believe she was

a foundling—her name of Harriet, changed to Fidelia; and, to lessen my solicitude for the theft, a letter was dispatched to me, in France, that my infant daughter had no longer a being. Thus was the father robbed of his child, and the brother taught to believe he had no sister.

Fid. Am I that sister, and that daughter?——Oh, Heavens! [*Kneels.*

Bel. [*Running to her, and raising her.*] Be composed, my life! A moment's attention more, and your transports shall have a loose. Proceed, sir.

Sir C. Where she withdrew herself, I could never learn. At twelve years old, she sold her, as you have heard, and never, till yesterday, made inquiry about her. 'Twas then, that a sudden fit of sickness brought her to repentance. She sent for Villiard, who told her minutely what had happened. The knowledge of her deliverance gave her some consolation. But more was to be done yet. She had information of my pardon and return, and ignorant of my child's deliverer, or the place of her conveyance, she at last determined to unburden herself to me. A letter was brought to me this afternoon, conjuring me to follow the bearer with the same haste that I would shun ruin. I did follow him, and received from this wretched woman the story I have told you.

Fid. Oh, my heart! My father! [*Kneels.*] Have I at last found you? And were all my sorrows past meant only to endear the present transport?—'Tis too much for me!

Sir C. Rise, my child! To find thee thus virtuous, in the midst of temptations, and thus lovely, in the midst of poverty and distress, after an absence of eighteen melancholy years, when imaginary death had torn thee from my hopes;—to find thee thus unexpectedly, and thus amiable, is happiness, that the uninterrupted enjoyments of the fairest life never *equalled!*

Fid. What must be mine then? Have I a brother too? [*Turning to* COLONEL RAYMOND.] Oh, my kind fortune!

Ray. My sister! [*Embracing her.*

Fid. Still there is a dearer claim than all, and now I can acknowledge it—My deliverer!

Bel. And husband, Fidelia! Let me receive you as the richest gift of fortune! [*Catching her in his Arms.*

Ros. My generous girl! The pride of your alliance is my utmost boast, as it is my brother's happiness!

Sir R. I have a right in her too, for now you are my daughter, Fidelia. [*Kisses her.*

Fid. I had forgot, sir—If you will receive me as such, you shall find my gratitude in my obedience.

Sir C. Take her, Mr. Belmont, and protect the virtue you have tried. [*Joining their Hands.*

Bel. The study of my life, sir, shall be to deserve her.

Fid. Oh, Rosetta! yet it still remains with you to make this day's happiness complete—I have a brother, that loves you.

Ros. I would be Fidelia's sister every way—So take me while I am warm, Colonel! [*Giving him her Hand.*

Ray. And when we repent, Rosetta, let the next minute end us.

Ros. With all my heart!

Fid. Now, Rosetta, we are doubly sisters!

Sir C. And may your lives, and your affections, know an end together!

Bel. [*Taking* FIDELIA *by the Hand.*] And now, Fidelia, what you have made me, take me, a convert to honour—I have at last learnt, that custom can be no authority for vice; and, however the mistaken world may judge, he, who solicits pleasure, at the expense of innocence, is the vilest of betrayers.

Yet savage man, the wildest beast of prey,
Assumes the face of kindness, to betray:
His giant strength against the weak employs,
And woman, whom he should protect, destroys.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

GAMESTER

BEVERLEY. — CAN YOU FORGIVE ME, LOVE?
ACT V. SCENE III.

Painted by Stothard. *Published by Longman & Cº 1816.* *Engraved by C. Heath.*

THE GAMESTER;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By EDWARD MOORE.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY Mrs. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

deluded into pity by the inimitable acting of a Mrs. Siddons and a Mr. Kemble, in Mr. and Mrs. Beverley, weeps with her; sighs with him; and conceives them to be a most amiable, though unfortunate, pair. But a reader, blessed with the common reflection which reading should give, calls the husband a very silly man, and the wife a very imprudent woman:—and as a man without sense, and a woman without prudence, degrade both the masculine and the feminine character, the punishment of the author is rather expected with impatience, than lamented as severe.

Stukely is so outrageously wicked, that his character can hardly comprise either moral, or example—yet, Stukely has temptations for his crimes; he is in love, and disappointed. But Beverley possesses all that he pretends to hold dear upon earth—though, like other weak characters, he does not understand his own inclinations; for it is most certain, he has long preferred bad company, and the delights of the dice, to the charms of his elegant and affectionate wife. In taste, therefore, Stukely has the advantage of his friend.

The only reasonable persons in this play, the author has, very unjustly, made the only insipid ones. Lewson and Charlotte have both excellent understandings, and yet, when brought upon the stage, they are mere foils to the knaves and fools of their acquaintance. It seems scarcely possible how a woman of Charlotte's good sense could endure to be the *constant companion* of another woman like her sister-in-

law, egregiously impassioned by conjugal love, and obstinately resolved not to make use of it for mutual preservation. When Mrs. Beverley gives up her last resort, her jewels, to her husband, an audience mostly supposes, that she performs an heroic action as a wife; but readers call to mind, she is a mother; and that she breaks through the dearest tie of nature, by thus yielding up the sole support of her infant child, to gratify the ideal honour of its duped and frantic father.

The reception of this play, when first performed, was by no means favourable; and it was said that the love of gaming had formed conspirators to drive it from the stage. But as the author meant his gamester to be an object of pity, not of detestation—and, in general, his design has been fulfilled—it appears that he has pleaded an apology for the vice, rather than set all hearts against it. Ridicule had been the best means by which to have accomplished its extirpation.

Had Beverley, in the beginning of the play, been seen with architects and masons around him, busy in laying the first stone of a castle, which was to be constructed with his intended winnings—the sight of this foundation in every act, rising no higher in its structure, and his own snug house gradually falling down, in the mean time, for want of repairs; and in the last scene, tumbling with pantomime crash, so as to break his shallow pate; whilst all the by-standers had laughed and hooted—this had been the surest moral for a gamester.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
BEVERLEY	*Mr. Pope.*	*Mr. Kemble.*
LEWSON	*Mr. C. Kemble.*	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
STUKELY.	*Mr. Barrymore.*	*Mr. Cooke.*
JARVIS	*Mr. Packer.*	*Mr. Murray.*
BATES	*Mr. Powell.*	*Mr. Waddy.*
DAWSON	*Mr. Caulfield.*	*Mr. Claremont.*
WAITER	*Mr. Webb.*	*Mr. Field.*
MRS. BEVERLEY	*Mrs. Pope.*	*Mrs. Siddons.*
CHARLOTTE	*Mrs. Powell.*	*Miss Brunton.*
LUCY	*Miss Tidswell.*	*Miss Waddy.*

THE GAMESTER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Be comforted, my dear; all may be well yet. And now, methinks, the lodging begins to look with another face. Oh, sister! sister! if these were all my hardships; if all I had to complain of were no more than quitting my house, servants, equipage, and show, your pity would be weakness.

Char. Is poverty nothing then?

Mrs. Bev. Nothing in the world, if it affected only me. While we had a fortune, I was the happiest of the rich: and now 'tis gone, give me but a bare subsistence and my husband's smiles, and I'll be the happiest of the poor. Why do you look at me?

Char. That I may hate my brother.

Mrs. Bev. Don't talk so, Charlotte.

Char. Has he not undone you?—Oh, this pernicious vice of gaming! But, methinks his usual hours

of four or five in the morning might have contented him. Need he have staid out all night?—I shall learn to detest him.

Mrs. Bev. Not for the first fault. He never slept from me before.

Char. Slept from you! No, no, his nights have nothing to do with sleep. How has this one vice driven him from every virtue!—Nay, from his affections, too!—The time was, sister——

Mrs. Bev. And is. I have no fear of his affections. 'Would I knew that he were safe!

Char. From ruin and his companions.—But that's impossible. His poor little boy, too! What must become of him?

Mrs. Bev. Why, want shall teach him industry. From his father's mistakes he shall learn prudence, and from his mother's resignation, patience. Poverty has no such terrors in it as you imagine. There's no condition of life, sickness and pain excepted, where happiness is excluded. The husbandman, who rises early to his labour, enjoys more welcome rest at night for it. His bread is sweeter to him; his home happier; his family dearer; his enjoyments surer. The sun, that rouses him in the morning, sets in the evening to release him. All situations have their comforts, if sweet contentment dwell in the heart. But my poor Beverley has none. The thought of having ruined those he loves, is misery for ever to him. 'Would I could ease his mind of that!

Char. If he alone were ruined, 'twere just he should be punished. He is my brother, 'tis true; but when I think of what he has done; of the fortune you brought him; of his own large estate too, squandered away upon this vilest of passions, and among the vilest of wretches! Oh, I have no patience! My own little fortune is untouched, he says. Would I were sure on't.

Mrs. Bev. And so you may—'twould be a sin to doubt it.

Char. I will be sure on't—'twas madness in me to give it to his management. But I'll demand it from him this morning. I have a melancholy occasion for it.

Mrs. Bev. What occasion?

Char. To support a sister.

Mrs. Bev. No; I have no need on't. Take it, and reward a lover with it.—The generous Lewson deserves much more.—Why won't you make him happy?

Char. Because my sister's miserable.

Mrs. Bev. You must not think so. I have my jewels left yet. And when all's gone, these hands shall toil for our support. The poor should be industrious—Why those tears, Charlotte?

Char. They flow in pity for you.

Mrs. Bev. All may be well yet. When he has nothing to lose, I shall fetter him in these arms again; and then what is it to be poor?

Char. Cure him but of this destructive passion, and my uncle's death may retrieve all yet.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, Charlotte, could we cure him. But the disease of play admits no cure but poverty; and the loss of another fortune would but increase his shame and his affliction. Will Mr. Lewson call this morning?

Char. He said so last night. He gave me hints too, that he had suspicions of our friend Stukely.

Mrs. Bev. Not of treachery to my husband? That he loves play, I know, but surely he's honest.

Char. He would fain be thought so; therefore I doubt him. Honesty needs no pains to set itself off.

Enter LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. What now, Lucy?

Lucy. Your old steward, madam. I had not the

heart to deny him admittance, the good old man begged so hard for't. [*Exit* LUCY.

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs. Bev. Is this well, Jarvis? I desired you to avoid me.

Jar. Did you, madam? I am an old man, and had forgot. Perhaps, too, you forbad my tears; but I am old, madam, and age will be forgetful.

Mrs. Bev. The faithful creature! how he moves me! [*To* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Not to have seen him had been cruelty.

Jar. I have forgot these apartments too. I remember none such in my young master's house; and yet I have lived in't these five and twenty years. His good father would not have dismissed me.

Mrs. Bev. He had no reason, Jarvis.

Jar. I was faithful to him, while he lived, and when he died, he bequeathed me to his son. I have been faithful to him too.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, I know it, Jarvis.

Jar. I have not a long time to live. I asked but to have died with him, and he dismissed me.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee no more of this! 'Twas his poverty that dismissed you.

Jar. Is he indeed so poor, then?—Oh! he was the joy of my old heart—But must his creditors have all?—And have they sold his house too? His father built it when he was but a prating boy. The times that I have carried him in these arms! And, Jarvis, says he, when a beggar has asked charity of me, why should people be poor? You shan't be poor, Jarvis; if I were a king, nobody should be poor. Yet he is poor. And then he was so brave!—Oh, he was a brave little boy! And yet so merciful, he'd not have killed the gnat that stung him.

Mrs. Bev. Speak to him, Charlotte; for I cannot.

Jar. *I have a little* money, madam; it might have

been more, but I have loved the poor. All that I have is yours.

Mrs. Bev. No, Jarvis; we have enough yet. I thank you, though, and I will deserve your goodness.

Jar. But shall I see my master? And will he let me attend him in his distresses? I'll be no expense to him; and 'twill kill me to be refused. Where is he, madam?

Mrs. Bev. Not at home, Jarvis. You shall see him another time.

Char. To-morrow, or the next day—Oh, Jarvis! what a change is here?

Jar. A change indeed, madam! my old heart aches at it. And yet, methinks——But here's somebody coming.

Enter LUCY, *with* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Good morning to you, ladies. Mr. Jarvis, your servant. Where's my friend, madam? [*To* MRS. BEVERLEY.

Mrs. Bev. I should have asked that question of you. Have you seen him to-day?

Stuke. No, madam.

Char. Nor last night?

Stuke. Last night! Did he not come home, then?

Mrs. Bev. No. Were you not together?

Stuke. At the beginning of the evening; but not since. Where can he have staid?

Char. You call yourself his friend, sir; why do you encourage him in this madness of gaming?

Stuke. You have asked me that question before, madam; and I told you my concern was that I could not save him; Mr. Beverley is a man, madam; and if the most friendly entreaties have no effect upon him, I have no other means. My purse has been his, even to the injury of my fortune. If that has been encou-

ragement, I deserve censure; but I meant it to retrieve him.

Mrs. Bev. I don't doubt it, sir; and I thank you —But where did you leave him last night?

Stuke. At Wilson's, madam, if I ought to tell; in company I did not like. Possibly he may be there still. Mr. Jarvis knows the house, I believe.

Jar. Shall I go, madam?

Mrs. Bev. No, he may take it ill.

Char. He may go as from himself.

Stuke. And, if he pleases, madam, without naming me. I am faulty myself, and should conceal the errors of a friend. But I can refuse nothing here.

[*Bowing to the* LADIES.

Jar. I would fain see him, methinks.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, then; but take care how you upbraid him—I have never upbraided him.

Jar. Would I could bring him comfort! [*Exit.*

Stuke. Don't be too much alarmed, madam. All men have their errors, and their times of seeing them. Perhaps my friend's time is not come yet. But he has an uncle; and old men don't live for ever. You should look forward, madam; we are taught how to value a second fortune by the loss of a first.

[*Knocking at the Door.*

Mrs. Bev. Hark!—No—that knocking was too rude for Mr. Beverley. Pray Heaven he be well!

Stuke. Never doubt it, madam. You shall be well, too—Every thing shall be well. [*Knocking again.*

Mrs. Bev. The knocking is a little loud, though—Who waits there? Will none of you answer?—None of you, did I say?—Alas, what was I thinking of! I had forgot myself.

Char. I'll go, sister—But don't be alarmed so.

[*Exit.*

Stuke. What extraordinary accident have you to fear, madam?

Mrs. Bev. I beg your pardon; but 'tis ever thus with me in Mr. Beverley's absence. No one knocks at the door, but I fancy it is a messenger of ill news.

Stuke. You are too fearful, madam; 'twas but one night of absence; and if ill thoughts intrude (as love is always doubtful), think of your worth and beauty, and drive them from your breast.

Mrs. Bev. What thoughts? I have no thoughts that wrong my husband.

Stuke. Such thoughts indeed would wrong him. The world is full of slander; and every wretch, that knows himself unjust, charges his neighbour with like passions; and by the general frailty hides his own—If you are wise, and would be happy, turn a deaf ear to such reports. 'Tis ruin to believe them.

Mrs. Bev. Ay, worse than ruin. 'Twould be to sin against conviction. Why was it mentioned?

Stuke. To guard you against rumour. The sport of half mankind is mischief; and for a single error they make men devils. If their tales reach you, disbelieve them.

Mrs. Bev. What tales? By whom? Why told? I have heard nothing—or if I had, with all his errors, my Beverley's firm faith admits no doubt—It is my safety, my seat of rest and joy, while the storm threatens round me. I'll not forsake it. [STUKELY *sighs, and looks down.*] Why turn you, sir, away? and, why that sigh?

Stuke. I was attentive, madam; and sighs will come, we know not why. Perhaps I have been too busy—If it should seem so, impute my zeal to friendship, that meant to guard you against evil tongues. Your Beverley is wronged, slandered most vilely—My life upon his truth.

Mrs. Bev. And mine too. Who is't that doubts it? But no matter—I am prepared, sir——Yet why this caution?—You are my husband's friend; I think you

mine too; the common friend of both. [*Pauses.*] I had been unconcerned else.

Stuke. For Heaven's sake, madam, be so still! I meant to guard you against suspicion, not to alarm it.

Mrs. Bev. Nor have you, sir. Who told you of suspicion? I have a heart it cannot reach.

Stuke. Then I am happy—I would say more—but am prevented.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. What a heart has that Jarvis!—A creditor, sister. But the good old man has taken him away —"Don't distress his wife—Don't distress his sister," I could hear him say. "'Tis cruel to distress the afflicted"——And when he saw me at the door, he begged pardon that his friend had knocked so loud.

Stuke. I wish I had known of this. Was it a large demand, madam?

Char. I heard not that; but visits, such as these, we must expect often—Why so distressed, sister? This is no new affliction.

Mrs. Bev. No, Charlotte; but I am faint with watching—quite sunk and spiritless—Will you excuse me, sir? I'll to my chamber, and try to rest a little.

Stuke. Good thoughts go with you, madam. My bait is taken then. [*Aside.*]—Poor Mrs. Beverley! How my heart grieves to see her thus?

Char. Cure her, and be a friend then.

Stuke. How cure her, madam?

Char. Reclaim my brother.

Stuke. Ay, give him a new creation, or breathe another soul into him. I'll think on't, madam. Advice, I see, is thankless.

Char. Useless I am sure it is, if through mistaken friendship, or other motives, you feed his passion with your purse, and sooth it by example. Physicians, to cure fevers, keep from the patient's thirsty lip the cup

that would inflame him. You give it to his hands. [*A Knocking.*] Hark, sir!—These are my brother's desperate symptoms——Another creditor!

Stuke. One not so easily got rid of—What, Lewson!

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Madam, your servant——Yours, sir. I was inquiring for you at your lodgings.

Stuke. This morning! You had business, then?

Lew. You'll call it by another name, perhaps. Where's Mr. Beverley, madam?

Char. We have sent to inquire for him.

Lew. Is he abroad then? He did not use to go out so early.

Char. No, nor stay out so late.

Lew. Is that the case? I am sorry for it. But Mr. Stukely, perhaps, may direct you to him.

Stuke. I have already, sir. But what was your business with me?

Lew. To congratulate you upon your late successes at play. Poor Beverley!—But you are his friend; and there's a comfort in having successful friends.

Stuke. And what am I to understand by this?

Lew. That Beverley's a poor man, with a rich friend; that's all.

Stuke. Your words would mean something, I suppose. Another time, sir, I shall desire an explanation.

Lew. And why not now? I am no dealer in long sentences. A minute or two will do for me.

Stuke. But not for me, sir. I am slow of apprehension, and must have time and privacy. A lady's presence engages my attention. Another morning I may be found at home.

Lew. Another morning, then, I'll wait upon you.

Stuke. I shall expect you, sir. Madam, your servant. [*Exit.*

Char. What mean you by this?

Lew. To hint to him that I know him.

Char. How know him? Mere doubt and supposition!

Lew. I shall have proof soon.

Char. And what then? Would you risk your life to be his punisher?

Lew. My life, madam! Don't be afraid. And yet I am happy in your concern for me. But let it content you that I know this Stukely——'Twould be as easy to make him honest as brave.

Char. And what do you intend to do?

Lew. Nothing, till I have proof. Yet my suspicions, are well grounded—But, methinks, madam, I am acting here without authority. Could I have leave to call Mr. Beverley brother, his concerns would be my own. Why will you make my services appear officious?

Char. You know my reasons, and should not press me. But I am cold, you say; and cold I will be, while a poor sister's destitute——My heart bleeds for her; and till I see her sorrows moderated, love has no joys for me. But let us change this subject—Your business here this morning is with my sister. Misfortunes press too hard upon her; yet, till to-day, she has borne them nobly.

Lew. Where is she?

Char. Gone to her chamber. Her spirits failed her.

Lew. I hear her coming. Let what has passed with Stukely be a secret—She has already too much to trouble her.

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY.

Mrs. Bev. Good morning, sir; I heard your voice, and, as I thought, inquiring for me. Where's Mr. *Stukely, Charlotte?*

Char. This moment gone—You have been in tears, sister; but here's a friend shall comfort you.

Lew. Or, if I add to your distresses, I'll beg your pardon, madam. The sale of your house and furniture was finished yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, sir; I know too your generous reason for putting me in mind of it. But you have obliged me too much already.

Lew. There are trifles, madam, which I know you have set a value on; those I have purchased, and will deliver. I have a friend too, that esteems you—He has bought largely, and will call nothing his, till he has seen you. If a visit to him would not be painful, he has begged it may be this morning.

Mrs. Bev. Not painful in the least. My pain is from the kindness of my friends. Why am I to be obliged beyond the power of return?

Lew. You shall repay us at your own time. I have a coach waiting at the door—Shall we have your company, madam? [*To* CHARLOTTE.

Char. No; my brother may return soon; I'll stay and receive him.

Mrs. Bev. He may want a comforter, perhaps. But don't upbraid him, Charlotte. We shan't be absent long. Come, sir, since I must be so obliged.

Lew. 'Tis I that am obliged. An hour, or less, will be sufficient for us. We shall find you at home, madam? [*To* CHARLOTTE.—*Exit with* MRS. BEVERLEY.

Char. Certainly. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY.

Stuke. That Lewson suspects me, 'tis too plain. Yet why should he suspect me?—I appear the friend of Beverley as much as he. But I am rich, it seems; and so I am, thanks to another's folly, and my own wisdom. To what use is wisdom, but to take advantage of the weak? This Beverley's my fool; I cheat him, and he calls me friend. But more business must be done yet——His wife's jewels are unsold; so is the reversion of his uncle's estate: I must have these too. And then there's a treasure above all—I love his wife——Before she knew this Beverley I loved her; but, like a cringing fool, bowed at a distance, while he stepped in and won her——Never, never will I forgive him for it. Those hints this morning were well thrown in—Already they have fastened on her. If jealousy should weaken her affections, want may corrupt her virtue——These jewels may do much——He shall demand them of her; which when mine, shall be converted to special purposes—What now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. Is it a wonder then to see me? The forces are all in readiness, and only wait for orders. Where's Beverley?

Stuke. At last night's rendezvous, waiting for me. Is Dawson with you?

Bates. Dressed like a nobleman; with money in his pocket, and a set of dice, that shall deceive the devil.

Stuke. That fellow has a head to undo a nation; but for the rest, they are such low mannered, ill-looking dogs, I wonder Beverley has not suspected them.

Bates. No matter for manners and looks. Do you supply them with money, and they are gentlemen by profession——The passion of gaming casts such a mist before the eyes, that the nobleman shall be surrounded with sharpers, and imagine himself in the best company.

Stuke. There's that Williams too. It was he, I suppose, that called at Beverley's with the note this morning. What directions did you give him?

Bates. To knock loud, and be clamorous. Did not you see him?

Stuke. No, the fool sneaked off with Jarvis. Had he appeared within doors, as directed, the note had been discharged. I waited there on purpose. I want the women to think well of me; for Lewson's grown suspicious; he told me so himself.

Bates. What answer did you make him?

Stuke. A short one——That I would see him soon, for farther explanation.

Bates. We must take care of him. But what have we to do with Beverley? Dawson and the rest are wondering at you.

Stuke. Why, let them wonder. I have designs above their narrow reach. They see me lend him money, and they stare at me. But they are fools. I want him to believe me beggared by him.

Bates. And what then?

Stuke. Ay, there's the question; but no matter;

at night you may know more. He waits for me at Wilson's.—I told the women where to find him.

Bates. To what purpose?

Stuke. To save suspicion. It looked friendly, and they thanked me.—Old Jarvis was dispatched to him.

Bates. And may entreat him home——

Stuke. No; he expects money from me; but I'll have none. His wife's jewels must go—Women are easy creatures, and refuse nothing, where they love. Follow to Wilson's—Come, sir.

Let drudging fools by honesty grow great;
The shorter road to riches is deceit. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Gaming House, with a Table, Box, Dice, &c.

BEVERLEY *discovered sitting.*

Bev. Why, what a world is this! The slave, that digs for gold, receives his daily pittance, and sleeps contented: while those, for whom he labours, convert their good to mischief, making abundance the means of want. What had I to do with play?—I wanted *nothing*.—*My wishes* and my means were equal.—

The poor followed me with blessings, love scattered roses on my pillow, and morning waked me to delight—Oh, bitter thought, that leads to what I was, by what I am! I would forget both—Who's there?

Enter a WAITER.

Wait. A gentleman, sir, inquires for you.

Bev. He might have used less ceremony. Stukely, I suppose?

Wait. No, sir, a stranger.

Bev. Well, show him in. [*Exit* WAITER.] A messenger from Stukely then; from him that has undone me! yet all in friendship—And now he lends me his little, to bring back fortune to me.

Enter JARVIS.

Jarvis!—Why this intrusion?—Your absence had been kinder.

Jar. I came in duty, sir. If it be troublesome—

Bev. It is—I would be private—hid even from myself. Who sent you hither?

Jar. One that would persuade you home again. My mistress is not well—her tears told me so.

Bev. Go with thy duty there then—Pr'ythee, begone—I have no business for thee.

Jar. Yes, sir; to lead you from this place. I am your servant still. Your prosperous fortune blessed my old age: If that has left you, I must not leave you.

Bev. Not leave me! Recall past time, then; or, through this sea of storms and darkness, show me a star to guide me.—But what canst thou?

Jar. The little that I can, I will. You have been generous to me—I would not offend you, sir—but—

Bev. No. Think'st thou I'd ruin thee too? I have enough of shame already——My wife! my wife! Wouldst thou believe it, Jarvis? I have not seen her *all this long* night—I, who have loved her so,

that every hour of absence seemed as a gap in life! But other bonds have held me—Oh, I have played the boy! dropping my counters in the stream, and reaching to redeem them, lost myself!

Jar. For pity's sake, sir!—I have no heart to see this change.

Bev. Nor I to bear it—How speaks the world of me, Jarvis?

Jar. As of a good man dead.—Of one, who, walking in a dream, fell down a precipice. The world is sorry for you.

Bev. Ay, and pities me—Says it not so? But I was born to infamy. I'll tell thee what it says; it calls me villain, a treacherous husband, a cruel father, a false brother, one lost to nature and her charities; or, to say all in one short word, it calls me—gamester. Go to thy mistress—I'll see her presently.

Jar. And why not now? Rude people press upon her; loud, bawling creditors; wretches, who know no pity—I met one at the door—he would have seen my mistress: I wanted means of present payment, so promised it to-morrow: But others may be pressing, and she has grief enough already.—Your absence hangs too heavy on her.

Bev. Tell her I'll come then. I have a moment's business. But what hast thou to do with my distresses? Thy honesty has left thee poor; and age wants comfort.—Keep what thou hast for cordials, lest between thee and the grave, misery steal in. I have a friend shall counsel me—This is that friend.

Enter STUKELEY.

Stuke. How fares it, Beverley? Honest Mr. Jarvis, well met; I hoped to find you here. That viper, Williams! Was it not he that troubled you this morning?

Jar. My mistress heard him then; I am sorry that she heard him.

Bev. And Jarvis promised payment.

Stuke. That must not be. Tell him I'll satisfy him.

Jar. Will you, sir? Heaven will reward you for it.

Bev. Generous Stukeley! Friendship like yours, had it ability like will, would more than balance the wrongs of fortune.

Stuke. You think too kindly of me—Make haste to Williams; his clamours may be rude else.

[*To* JARVIS.

Jar. And my master will go home again—Alas! sir, we know of hearts there breaking for his absence.

[*Exit.*

Bev. 'Would I were dead!

Stuke. Ha! ha! ha! Pr'ythee, be a man, and leave dying to disease and old age. Fortune may be ours again; at least we'll try for't.

Bev. No; it has fooled us on too far.

Stuke. Ay, ruined us; and therefore we'll sit down contented. These are the despondings of men without money; but let the shining ore chink in the pocket, and folly turns to wisdom. We are fortune's children—True, she's a fickle mother; but shall we droop because she's peevish?—No; she has smiles in store, and these, her frowns, are meant to brighten them.

Bev. Is this a time for levity?—But you are single in the ruin, and, therefore, may talk lightly of it: with me, 'tis complicated misery.

Stuke. You censure me unjustly; I but assumed these spirits to cheer my friend. Heaven knows, he wants a comforter.

Bev. What new misfortune?

Stuke. I would have brought you money, but lenders want securities. What's to be done? All, that was mine, is yours already.

Bev. And there's the double weight that sinks me. I have undone my friend too; one who, to save a

drowning wretch, reached out his hand, and perished with him.

Stuke. Have better thoughts.

Bev. Whence are they to proceed? I have nothing left.

Stuke. [*Sighing.*] Then we're indeed undone—— What! nothing? No moveables, nor useless trinkets? —Bawbles locked up in caskets, to starve their owners? I have ventured deeply for you.

Bev. Therefore this heart-ache; for I am lost beyond all hope.

Stuke. No; means may be found to save us.—Jarvis is rich—Who made him so? This is no time for ceremony.

Bev. And is it for dishonesty? The good old man? Shall I rob him too? My friend would grieve for't.—No; let the little that he has, buy food and clothing for him.

Stuke. Good morning then. [*Going.*

Bev. So hasty! Why, then, good morning.

Stuke. And when we meet again, upbraid me—Say it was I that tempted you—Tell Lewson so, and tell him, I have wronged you—He has suspicions of me, and will thank you.

Bev. No; we have been companions in a rash voyage, and the same storm has wrecked us both: Mine shall be self upbraidings.

Stuke. And will they feed us? You deal unkindly by me. I have sold, and borrowed, for you, while land, or credit, lasted; and now, when fortune should be tried, and my heart whispers me success, I am deserted—turned loose to beggary, while you have hoards.

Bev. What hoards? Name them, and take them.

Stuke. Jewels.

Bev. And shall this thriftless hand seize them too? My poor, poor wife! Must she lose all? I would not *wound her so.*

Stuke. Nor I, but from necessity. One effort more, and fortune may grow kind.—I have unusual hopes.

Bev. Think of some other means then.

Stuke. I have; and you rejected them.

Bev. Pr'ythee, let me be a man.

Stuke. Ay, and your friend a poor one—But I have done: And for these trinkets of a woman, why, let her keep them, to deck out pride with, and show a laughing world, that she has finery to starve in.

Bev. No; she shall yield up all—My friend demands it. But need we have talked lightly of her? The jewels, that she values, are truth and innocence—Those will adorn her ever; and, for the rest, she wore them for a husband's pride, and to his wants will give them. Alas! you know her not.—Where shall we meet?

Stuke. No matter; I have changed my mind—Leave me to a prison; 'tis the reward of friendship.

Bev. Perish mankind first—Leave you to a prison! No! fallen as you see me, I'm not that wretch; Nor would I change this heart, o'ercharged as 'tis with folly and misfortune, for one most prudent, and most happy, if callous to a friend's distress.

Stuke. You are too warm.

Bev. In such a cause, not to be warm, is to be frozen. Farewell—I'll meet you at your lodgings.

Stuke. Reflect a little.—The jewels may be lost—Better not hazard them—I was too pressing.

Bev. And I ungrateful. Reflection takes up time—I have no leisure for't—Within an hour expect me. [*Exit.*

Stuke. The thoughtless, shallow prodigal! We shall have sport at night, then—but hold—The jewels are not ours yet—The lady may refuse them—The husband may relent too—'Tis more than probable—I'll write a note to Beverley, and the contents shall spur him to demand them—But am I grown this rogue *through avarice?* No; I have warmer motives, love,

and revenge—Ruin the husband, and the wife's virtue may be bid for.

Enter BATES.

Look to your men, Bates; there's money stirring.—We meet to-night, upon this spot.—Hasten, and tell them.—Hasten, I say, the rogues will scatter else.

Bates. Not till their leader bids them.

Stuke. Come on, then—Give them the word, and follow me; I must advise with you—This is a day of business. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. Your looks are changed too;—there's wildness in them. My wretched sister! How will it grieve her to see you thus!

Bev. No, no; a little rest will ease me. And for your Lewson's kindness to her, it has my thanks; I have no more to give him.

Char. Yes; a sister, and her fortune. I trifle with him, and he complains—My looks, he says, are cold upon him. He thinks too——

Bev. That I have lost your fortune—He dares not think so.

Char. Nor does he—you are too quick at guessing—He cares not if you had. That care is mine—I lent it you to husband, and now I claim it.

Bev. You have suspicions then?

Char. Cure them, and give it me.

Bev. To stop a sister's chidings?

Char. To vindicate her brother.

Bev. How if he needs no vindication?

Char. I would fain hope so.

Bev. Ay, would and cannot—Leave it to time, then; 'twill satisfy all doubts.

Char. Mine are already satisfied.

Bev. 'Tis well. And when the subject is renewed, speak to me like a sister, and I will answer like a brother.

Char. To tell me I'm a beggar.—Why, tell it now. I, that can bear the ruin of those dearer to me—the ruin of a sister and her infant, can bear that too.

Bev. No more of this—you wring my heart.

Char. 'Would that the misery were all your own! But innocence must suffer—Unthinking rioter! whose home was heaven to him! an angel dwelt there, and a little cherub, that crowned his days with blessings.—How he has lost this heaven, to league with devils!

Bev. Forbear, I say; reproaches come too late;—they search, but cure not. And, for the fortune you demand, we'll talk to-morrow on't—our tempers may be milder.

Char. Or, if 'tis gone, why, farewell all. I claimed it for a sister.—But I'll upbraid no more. What Heaven permits, perhaps, it may ordain.—Yet, that the husband, father, brother, should be its instruments of vengeance!—'Tis grievous to know that!

Bev. If you're my sister, spare the remembrance—it wounds too deeply. To-morrow shall clear all; and when the worst is known, it may be better than your fears. Comfort my wife; and for the pains of absence, I'll make atonement. The world may yet go well with us.

Char. See where she comes!—Look cheerfully upon her—Affections such as hers are prying, and lend those eyes that read the soul.

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* LEWSON.

Mrs. Bev. My life!

Bev. My love! how fares it? I have been a truant husband.

Mrs. Bev. But we meet now, and that heals all—Doubts and alarms I have had; but in this dear embrace I bury and forget them. My friend, here, [*Pointing to* LEWSON.] has been indeed a friend. Charlotte, 'tis you must thank him: your brother's thanks and mine are of too little value.

Bev. Yet what we have we'll pay. I thank you, sir, and am obliged. I would say more, but that your goodness to the wife upbraids the husband's follies. Had I been wise, she had not trespassed on your bounty.

Lew. Nor has she trespassed. The little I have done, acceptance overpays.

Char. So friendship thinks——

Mrs. Bev. And double obligations by striving to conceal them—We'll talk another time on't—You are too thoughtful, love.

Bev. No, I have reason for these thoughts.

Char. And hatred for the cause—'Would you had that too!

Bev. I have——The cause was avarice.

Char. And who the tempter?

Bev. A ruined friend—ruined by too much kindness.

Lew. Ay, worse than ruined; stabbed in his fame, mortally stabbed—riches can't cure him.

Bev. Or, if they could, those I have drained him of. Something of this he hinted in the morning—that Lewson had suspicions of him——Why these suspicions? [*Angrily.*

Lew. At school we knew this Stukely. A cunning, *plodding boy* he was, sordid and cruel, slow at his

task, but quick at shifts and tricking. He schemed out mischief, that others might be punished; and would tell his tale with so much art, that for the lash he merited, rewards and praise were given him. Show me a boy with such a mind, and time, that ripens manhood in him, shall ripen vice too——I'll prove him, and lay him open to you——Till then be warned—I know him, and therefore shun him.

Bev. As I would those that wrong him.—You are too busy, sir.

Mrs. Bev. No, not too busy—Mistaken, perhaps—That had been milder.

Lew. No matter, madam. I can bear this, and praise the heart that prompts it—Pity such friendship should be so placed!

Bev. Again, sir! But I'll bear too—You wrong him, Lewson, and will be sorry for't.

Char. Ay, when 'tis prov'd he wrongs him. The world is full of hypocrites.

Bev. And Stukely one—so you would infer, I think.—I'll hear no more of this—my heart aches for him—I have undone him.

Lew. The world says otherwise.

Bev. The world is false, then—I have business with you, love. [*To* MRS. BEVERLEY.] We'll leave them to their rancour. [*Going.*

Char. No; we shall find room within for't.—Come this way, sir. [*To* LEWSON.

Lew. Another time my friend will thank me; that time is hastening too.

[*Exeunt* LEWSON *and* CHARLOTTE.

Bev. They hurt me beyond bearing—Is Stukely false! Then honesty has left us! 'Twere sinning against Heaven to think so.

Mrs. Bev. I never doubted him.

Bev. No; you are charity. Meekness and everduring patience live in that heart, and love that knows no change.—Why did I ruin you?

Mrs. Bev. You have not ruined me. I have no wants when you are present, nor wishes in your absence, but to be blest with your return. Be but resigned to what has happened, and I am rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

Bev. My generous girl!——But memory will be busy; still crowding on my thoughts, to sour the present by the past. I have another pang too.

Mrs. Bev. Tell it, and let me cure it.

Bev. That friend—that generous friend, whose fame they have traduced—I have undone him too. While he had means, he lent me largely; and now a prison must be his portion.

Mrs. Bev. No; I hope otherwise.

Bev. To hope must be to act. The charitable wish feeds not the hungry——Something must be done.

Mrs. Bev. What?

Bev. In bitterness of heart he told me, just now he told me, I had undone him. Could I hear that, and think of happiness? No; I have disclaimed it, while he is miserable.

Mrs. Bev. The world may mend with us, and then we may be grateful. There's comfort in that hope.

Bev. Ay; 'tis the sick man's cordial, his promised cure; while, in preparing it, the patient dies——What now?

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. A letter, sir. [*Delivers it, and exit.*

Bev. The hand is Stukely's.

[*Opens it, and reads it to himself.*

Mrs. Bev. And brings good news—at least I'll hope so——What says he, love?

Bev. Why this—too much for patience. Yet he directs me to conceal it from you. [Reads.] *Let your haste to see me be the only proof of your esteem for me. I have determined, since we parted, to bid adieu to England; chusing rather to forsake* my country, than one

my freedom in it to the means we talked of. Keep this a secret at home, and hasten to the ruined

R. STUKELY.

Ruined by friendship!——I must relieve or follow him.

Mrs. Bev. Follow him, did you say? Then I am lost, indeed!

Bev. O this infernal vice! how has it sunk me! A vice, whose highest joy was poor to my domestic happiness. Yet how have I pursued it! turned all my comforts to bitterest pangs, and all my smiles, to tears.—Damned, damned infatuation!

Mrs. Bev. Be cool, my life! What are the means the letter talks of? Have you—have I those means? Tell me, and ease me. I have no life while you are wretched.

Bev. No, no; it must not be. 'Tis I alone have sinned; 'tis I alone must suffer. You shall reserve those means, to keep my child and his wronged mother from want and wretchedness.

Mrs. Bev. What means?

Bev. I came to rob you of them—but cannot—dare not——Those jewels are your sole support—I should be more than monster to request them.

Mrs. Bev. My jewels! Trifles, not worth speaking of, if weighed against a husband's peace; but let them purchase that, and the world's wealth is of less value.

Bev. Amazing goodness! How little do I seem before such virtues!

Mrs. Bev. No more, my love. I kept them till occasion called to use them; now is the occasion, and I'll resign them cheerfully.

Bev. Why, we'll be rich in love then. But this excess of kindness melts me. Yet for a friend one would do much—He has denied me nothing.

Mrs. Bev. Come to my closet—But let him manage *wisely.* We have no more to give him.

Bev. Where learnt my love this excellence? 'Tis

Heaven's own teaching: that Heaven, which to an angel's form has given a mind more lovely. I am unworthy of you, but will deserve you better.

Henceforth my follies and neglects shall cease,
And all to come be penitence and peace;
Vice shall no more attract me with her charms,
Nor pleasure reach me, but in these dear arms.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY *and* BATES.

Stuke. So runs the world, Bates. Fools are the natural prey of knaves; Nature designed them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws, that fear and policy have framed, Nature disclaims: she knows but two, and those are force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there's danger in't; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Bates. And therefore wisely. Force must have nerves and sinews; cunning wants neither. The dwarf *that has it shall* trip the giant's heels up.

Stuke. And bind him to the ground. Why, we'll

erect a shrine for Nature, and be her oracles. Conscience is weakness; fear made it, and fear maintains it. The dread of shame, inward reproaches, and fictitious burnings swell out the phantom. Nature knows none of this; her laws are freedom.

Bates. Sound doctrine, and well delivered!

Stuke. We are sincere, too, and practise what we teach. Let the grave pedant say as much.—But now to business—The jewels are disposed of: and Beverley again worth money. If my design succeeds, this night we finish with him—Go to your lodgings, and be busy—You understand conveyances, and make ruin sure.

Bates. Better stop here. The sale of this reversion may be talked of—There's danger in it.

Stuke. No, 'tis the mark I aim at. We'll thrive and laugh. You are the purchaser, and there's the payment. [*Giving a Pocket Book.*] He thinks you rich; and so you shall be. Inquire for titles, and deal hardly; 'twill look like honesty.

Bates. How if he suspects us.

Stuke. Leave it to me. I study hearts, and when to work upon them. Go to your lodgings; and if we come, be busy over papers. Talk of a thoughtless age, of gaming and extravagance; you have a face for't.

Bates. A feeling too that would avoid it. We push too far; but I have cautioned you. If it ends ill, you'll think of me—and so, adieu. [*Exit.*

Stuke. This fellow sins by halves; his fears are conscience to him. I'll turn these fears to use. Rogues that dread shame, will still be greater rogues to hide their guilt—Lewson grows troublesome—We must get rid of him—He knows too much. I have a tale for Beverley; part of it truth, too—He shall call Lewson to account—If it succeeds, 'tis well; if not, we must try other means—But here he comes—I must dissemble.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Look to the door there!—[*In a seeming Fright.*]—My friend!—I thought of other visitors.

Bev. No; these shall guard you from them—[*Offering Notes.*] Take them, and use them cautiously—The world deals hardly by us.

Stuke. And shall I leave you destitute? No: your wants are the greatest. Another climate may treat me kinder. The shelter of to-night takes me from this.

Bev. Let these be your support then—Yet is there need of parting? I may have means again; we'll share them, and live wisely.

Stuke. No: I should tempt you on. Habit is nature in me: ruin can't cure it. Even now I would be gaming. Taught by experience as I am, and knowing this poor sum is all that's left us, I am for venturing still—And say I am too blame—Yet will this little supply our wants? No, we must put it out to usury. Whether 'tis madness in me, or some restless impulse of good fortune, I yet am ignorant; but——

Bev. Take it, and succeed then. I'll try no more.

Stuke. 'Tis surely impulse; it pleads so strongly—But you are cold—We'll e'en part here then. And for this last reserve, keep it for better uses; I'll have none on't. I thank you though, and will seek fortune singly—One thing I had forgot——

Bev. What is it?

Stuke. Perhaps, 'twere best forgotten. But I am open in my nature, and zealous for the honour of my friend—Lewson speaks freely of you.

Bev. Of you, I know he does.

Stuke. I can forgive him for't; but, for my friend, I'm angry.

Bev. What says he of me?

Stuke. That Charlotte's fortune is embezzled—He talks on't loudly.

Bev. He shall be silenced, then—How heard you of it?

Stuke. From many. He questioned Bates about it. You must account with him, he says.

Bev. Or he with me—and soon, too.

Stuke. Speak mildly to him. Cautions are best.

Bev. I'll think on't—But whither go you?

Stuke. From poverty and prisons—No matter whither. If fortune changes, you may hear from me.

Bev. May these be prosperous, then. [*Offering the Notes, which he refuses.*] Nay, they are yours—I have sworn it, and will have nothing—Take them, and use them.

Stuke. Singly I will not—My cares are for my friend; for his lost fortune and ruined family. All separate interests I disclaim. Together we have fallen; together we must rise. My heart, my honour, and affections, all will have it so.

Bev. I am weary of being fooled.

Stuke. And so am I—Here let us part, then—These bodings of good fortune shall all be stifled; call them folly, and forget them—farewell.

Bev. No; stay a moment—How my poor heart's distracted! I have the bodings too; but whether caught from you, or prompted by my good or evil genius, I know not—The trial shall determine—And yet, my wife.

Stuke. Ay, ay, she'll chide.

Bev. No; my chidings are all here.

[*Pointing to his Heart.*

Stuke. I'll not persuade you.

Bev. I am persuaded; by reason too; the strongest reason; necessity. Oh, could I but regain the height I have fallen from, Heaven should forsake me in my latest hour, if I again mixed in these scenes, or

sacrificed the husband's peace, his joy, and best affections, to avarice and infamy.

Stuke. I have resolved like you; and since our motives are so honest, why should we fear success?

Bev. Come on, then—Where shall we meet?

Stuke. At Wilson's—Yet if it hurts you, leave me: I have misled you often.

Bev. We have misled each other—But come! Fortune is fickle, and may be tired with plaguing us—There let us rest our hopes.

Stuke. Yet think a little——

Bev. I cannot—thinking but distracts me.

When desperation leads, all thoughts are vain;
Reason would lose what rashness may obtain.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Char. 'Twas all a scheme, a mean one; unworthy of my brother.

Mrs. Bev. No, I am sure it was not—Stukely is honest too; I know he is—This madness has undone them both.

Char. My brother irrecoverable—You are too spiritless a wife—A mournful tale, mixed with a few kind words; will steal away your soul. The world's too subtle for such goodness. Had I been by, he should have asked your life sooner than those jewels.

Mrs. Bev. He should have had it, then. [*Warmly.*]

I live but to oblige him. She, who can love, and is beloved like me, will do as much. Men have done more for mistresses, and women for a base deluder: and shall a wife do less? Your chidings hurt me, Charlotte.

Char. And come too late; they might have saved you else. How could he use you so?

Mrs. Bev. 'Twas friendship did it. His heart was breaking for a friend.

Char. The friend, that has betrayed him.

Mrs. Bev. Pr'ythee don't think so.

Char. To-morrow he accounts with me.

Mrs. Bev. And fairly—I will not doubt it.

Char. Unless a friend has wanted—I have no patience—Sister! sister! we are bound to curse this friend.

Mrs. Bev. My Beverley speaks nobly of him.

Char. And Lewson truly—But I displease you with this talk.—To-morrow will instruct us.

Mrs. Bev. Stay till it comes then—I would not think so hardly.

Char. Nor I, but from conviction—Yet we have hope of better days. My uncle is infirm, and of an age that threatens hourly—Or if he lives, you never have offended him; and for distresses so unmerited he will have pity.

Mrs. Bev. I know it, and am cheerful.

Char. My Lewson will be kind too. While he and I have life and means, you shall divide with us—And see, he's here!

Enter LEWSON.

We were just speaking of you.

Lew. 'Tis best to interrupt you then. Few characters will bear a scrutiny; and where the bad outweighs the good, he's safest, that's least talked of. What say you, madam? [To CHARLOTTE.

Char. That I hate scandal, though a woman—therefore talk seldom of you.

Mrs. Bev. Or, with more truth, that, though a woman, she loves to praise—Therefore talks always of you. I'll leave you to decide it. [*Exit.*

Lew. How good and amiable! I came to talk in private with you; of matters that concern you. 'Tis now a tedious twelvemonth, since, with an open and kind heart, you said you loved me.

Char. So tedious, did you say?

Lew. And when in consequence of such sweet words, I pressed for marriage, you gave a voluntary promise that you would live for me.

Char. You think me changed, then? [*Angrily.*

Lew. I did not say so. A thousand times I have pressed for the performance of this promise: but private cares, a brother's and a sister's ruin, were reasons for delaying it.

Char. I had no other reasons.—Where will this end?

Lew. It shall end presently.

Char. Go on, sir.

Lew. A promise, such as this, given freely, not extorted, the world thinks binding; but I think otherwise.

Char. And would release me from it?

Lew. You are too impatient, madam.

Char. Cool, sir—quite cool—Pray go on.

Lew. Time and a near acquaintance with my faults may have brought change—if it be so; or for a moment, if you have wished this promise were unmade, here I acquit you of it—This is my question then; and with such plainness as I ask it, I shall entreat an answer. Have you repented of this promise?

Char. Stay, sir. The man, that can suspect me, shall find me changed—Why am I doubted?

Lew. My doubts are of myself. I have my faults, *and you have* observation. If from my temper, my *words or actions*, you have conceived a thought against

me, or even a wish for separation, all that has passed is nothing.

Char. You startle me—But tell me—I must be answered first. Is it from honour you speak this? Or do you wish me changed?

Lew. Heaven knows I do not.—Life and my Charlotte are so connected, that to lose one, were loss of both. Yet for a promise, though given in love, and meant for binding; if time or accident, or reason, should change opinion—with me that promise has no force.

Char. Why, now I'll answer you. Your doubts are prophecies—I am really changed.

Lew. Indeed!

Char. I could torment you now, as you have me; but it is not in my nature.—That I am changed, I own: for what at first was inclination, is now grown reason in me; and from that reason, had I the world, nay, were I poorer than the poorest, and you too wanting bread, with but a hovel to invite me to—I would be yours, and happy.

Lew. My kindest Charlotte! [*Taking her Hand.*] Thanks are too poor for this—and words too weak! But if we love so, why should our union be delayed?

Char. For happier times. The present are too wretched.

Lew. I may have reasons, that press it now.

Char. What reasons?

Lew. The strongest reasons; unanswerable ones.

Char. Be quick and name them.

Lew. First promise, that to-morrow, or the next day, you will be mine for ever.

Char. I do—though misery should succeed.

Lew. Thus then I seize you! And with you every joy on this side heaven!

Char. Now, sir, your secret.

Lew. Your fortune's lost.

Char. My fortune lost!—I'll study to be humble then. But was my promise claimed for this? How nobly generous! Where learned you this sad news?

Lew. From Bates, Stukely's prime agent. I have obliged him, and he's grateful—He told it me in friendship, to warn me from my Charlotte.

Char. 'Twas honest in him, and I'll esteem him for it.

Lew. He knows much more than he has told.

Char. For me it is enough. And for your generous love, I thank you from my soul. If you'd oblige me more, give me a little time.

Lew. Why time? It robs us of our happiness.

Char. I have a task to learn first. The little pride this fortune gave me must be subdued. Once we were equal; and might have met obliging and obliged. But now 'tis otherwise; and for a life of obligations, I have not learned to bear it.

Lew. Mine is that life. You are too noble.

Char. Leave me to think on't.

Lew. To-morrow then you'll fix my happiness?

Char. All, that I can, I will.

Lew. It must be so; we live but for each other. Keep what you know a secret; and when we meet to-morrow, more may be known.—Farewell. [*Exit.*

Char. My poor, poor sister! how would this wound her! But I'll conceal it, and speak comfort to her. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in the Gaming-House.

Enter BEVERLEY *and* STUKELY.

Bev. Whither would you lead me? [*Angrily.*

Stuke. Where we may vent our curses.

Bev. Ay, on yourself, and those damned counsels that have destroyed me. A thousand fiends were in that bosom, and all let loose to tempt me—I had resisted else.

Stuke. Go on, sir—I have deserved this from you.

Bev. And curses everlasting—Time is too scanty for them——

Stuke. What have I done?

Bev. What the arch-devil of old did—soothed with false hopes, for certain ruin.

Stuke. Myself unhurt; nay, pleased at your destruction—So your words mean. Why, tell it to the world. I am too poor to find a friend in't.

Bev. A friend! What's he? I had a friend.

Stuke. And have one still.

Bev. Ay; I'll tell you of this friend. He found me happiest of the happy. Fortune and honour crowned me; and love and peace lived in my heart. One spark of folly lurked there; that too he found; and by deceitful breath blew into flames, that have consumed me. This friend were you to me.

Stuke. A little more, perhaps—The friend, who gave his all to save you; and not succeeding, chose ruin with you. But no matter, I have undone you, and am a villain.

Bev. No; I think not—The villains are within.

Stuke. What villains?

Bev. Dawson and the rest—We have been dupes to sharpers.

Stuke. How know you this? I have had doubts as well as you; yet still as fortune changed I blushed at my own thoughts.—But you have proofs, perhaps.

Bev. Ay, damned ones. Repeated losses—Night after night, and no reverse—Chance has no hand in this.

Stuke. I *think* more charitably; yet I am peevish *in my nature*, and apt to doubt—The world speaks

fairly of this Dawson; so it does of the rest. We have watched them closely too. But 'tis a right usurped by losers, to think the winners knaves—We'll have more manhood in us.

Bev. I know not what to think.——This night has stung me to the quick—Blasted my reputation too—I have bound my honour to these vipers; played meanly upon credit, till I tired them; and now they shun me, to rifle one another. What's to be done?

Stuke. Nothing. My counsels have been fatal.

Bev. By Heaven I'll not survive this shame—Traitor! 'tis you have brought it on me. [*Taking hold of him.*] Show me the means to save me, or I'll commit a murder here, and next upon myself.

Stuke. Why, do it then, and rid me of ingratitude.

Bev. Pr'ythee forgive this language—I speak I know not what—Rage and despair are in my heart, and hurry me to madness. My home is horror to me—I'll not return to it. Speak quickly; tell me, if in this wreck of fortune, one hope remains? Name it, and be my oracle.

Stuke. To vent your curses on—You have bestowed them liberally. Take your own counsel; and should a desperate hope present itself, 'twill suit your desperate fortune. I'll not advise you.

Bev. What hope? By Heaven I'll catch at it, however desperate. I am so sunk in misery, it cannot lay me lower.

Stuke. You have an uncle.

Bev. Ay, what of him?

Stuke. Old men live long by temperance; while their heirs starve on expectation.

Bev. What mean you?

Stuke. That the reversion of his estate is yours; and will bring money to pay debts with—Nay, more, it may retrieve what's past.

Bev. Or leave my child a beggar.

Stuke. And what's his father? A dishonourable one;

engaged for sums he cannot pay——That should be thought of.

Bev. It is my shame—The poison, that inflames me. Where shall we go? To whom? I'm impatient till all's lost.

Stuke. All may be yours again—Your man is Bates—He has large funds at his command, and will deal justly by you.

Bev. I am resolved—Tell them within we'll meet them presently; and with full purses, too—Come, follow me.

Stuke. No. I'll have no hand in this; nor do I counsel it—Use your discretion, and act from that. You'll find me at my lodgings.

Bev. Succeed what will, this night I'll dare the worst.
'Tis loss of fear, to be completely curs'd. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Why, lose it then for ever—Fear is the mind's worst evil: and 'tis a friendly office to drive it from the bosom—Thus far has fortune crowned me—Yet Beverley is rich; rich in his wife's best treasure, her honour and affections. I would supplant him there too. Charlotte is sometimes absent. The seeds of jealousy are sown already. If I mistake not, they have taken root too. Now is the time to ripen them, and reap the harvest. The softest of her sex, if wronged in love, or thinking that she's wronged, becomes a tigress in revenge—I'll instantly to Beverley's——No matter for the danger——When beauty leads us on, 'tis indiscretion to reflect, and cowardice to doubt.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* LUCY.

Mrs. Bev. Did Charlotte tell you any thing?

Lucy. No, madam.

Mrs. Bev. She looked confused, methought; said she had business with her Lewson; which, when I pressed to know, tears only were her answer.

Lucy. She seemed in haste too—Yet her return may bring you comfort.

Mrs. Bev. No, my kind girl; I was not born for it—But why do I distress thee? Thy sympathizing heart bleeds for the ills of others—What pity that thy mistress can't reward thee! But there's a Power above, that sees, and will remember all. [*Knocking.*] Hark! there's some one entering.

Lucy. Perhaps 'tis my master, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. Let him be well too, and I am satisfied. [*Goes to the Door, and listens.*] No, 'tis another's voice.

Enter LUCY *and* STUKELY.

Lucy. Mr. Stukely, madam. [*Exit.*

Stuke. To meet you thus alone, madam, was what I wished. Unseasonable visits, when friendship warrants them, need no excuse—therefore I make none.

Mrs. Bev. What mean you, sir? And where is your friend?

Stuke. Men may have secrets, madam, which their

best friends are not admitted to. We parted in the morning, not soon to meet again.

Mrs. Bev. You mean to leave us then—to leave your country too? I am no stranger to your reasons, and pity your misfortunes.

Stuke. Your pity has undone you. Could Beverley do this? That letter was a false one; a mean contrivance to rob you of your jewels—I wrote it not.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible! Whence came it then?

Stuke. Wronged as I am, madam, I must speak plainly.

Mrs. Bev. Do so, and ease me.—Your hints have troubled me. Reports, you say, are stirring—Reports of whom? You wished me not to credit them.—What, sir, are these reports?

Stuke. I thought them slander, madam; and cautioned in friendship, lest from officious tongues the tale had reached you with double aggravation.

Mrs. Bev. Proceed, sir.

Stuke. It is a debt due to my fame; due to an injured wife too.—We are both injured.

Mrs. Bev. How injured? And who has injured us?

Stuke. My friend—your husband.

Mrs. Bev. You would resent for both then; But know, sir, my injuries are my own, and do not need a champion.

Stuke. Be not too hasty, madam. I come not in resentment, but for acquittance. You thought me poor; and to the feigned distresses of a friend, gave up your jewels.

Mrs. Bev. I gave them to a husband.

Stuke. Who gave them to a——

Mrs. Bev. What? whom did he give them to?

Stuke. A mistress.

Mrs. Bev. No; on my life he did not.

Stuke. Himself confessed it, with curses on her avarice.

Mrs. Bev. I'll not believe it—He has no mistress; or if he has, why is it told to me?

Stuke. To guard you against insults. He told me, that, to move you to compliance, he forged that letter, pretending I was ruined, ruined by him too. The fraud succeeded; and what a trusting wife bestowed in pity, was lavished on a wanton.

Mrs. Bev. Then I am lost indeed! His follies I have borne without upbraiding, and saw the approach of poverty without a tear—My affections, my strong affections, supported me through every trial.

Stuke. Be patient, madam.

Mrs. Bev. Patient! The barbarous, ungrateful man! And does he think that the tenderness of my heart is his best security for wounding it? But he shall find that injuries such as these, can arm my weakness, for vengeance and redress.

Stuke. Ha! then I may succeed. [*Aside.*] Redress is in your power.

Mrs. Bev. What redress?

Stuke. Forgive me, madam, if, in my zeal to serve you, I hazard your displeasure. Think of your wretched state. Already want surrounds you—Is it in patience to bear that? To see your helpless little one robbed of his birthright? A sister too, with unavailing tears, lamenting her lost fortune? No comfort left you, but ineffectual pity from the few, outweighed by insults from the many.

Mrs. Bev. Am I so lost a creature?—Well, sir, my redress?

Stuke. To be resolved is to secure it. The marriage-vow, once violated, is, in the sight of Heaven, dissolved—Start not, but hear me. 'Tis now the summer of your youth: time has not cropped the roses from your cheek, though sorrow long has washed them: Then use your beauty wisely, and, freed by injuries, fly from the cruellest of men, for shelter with *he kindest.*

Mrs. Bev. And who is he?

Stuke. A friend to the unfortunate; a bold one too, who, while the storm is bursting on your brow, and lightning flashing from your eyes, dares tell you, that he loves you.

Mrs. Bev. 'Would that these eyes had Heaven's own lightning, that, with a look, thus I might blast thee! Am I then fallen so low? Has poverty so humbled me, that I should listen to a hellish offer, and sell my soul for bread? Oh, villain! villain!—But now I know thee, and thank thee for the knowledge.

Stuke. If you are wise, you shall have cause to thank me.

Mrs. Bev. An injured husband too shall thank thee.

Stuke. Yet know, proud woman, I have a heart as stubborn as your own! as haughty and imperious; and, as it loves, so can it hate.

Mrs. Bev. Mean, despicable villain! I scorn thee and thy threats. Was it for this that Beverley was false?—that his too credulous wife should, in despair and vengeance, give up her honour to a wretch? But he shall know it, and vengeance shall be his.

Stuke. Why, send him for defiance then—Tell him I love his wife; but that a worthless husband forbids our union. I'll make a widow of you, and court you honourably.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, coward, coward! thy soul will shrink at him: Yet, in the thought of what may happen, I feel a woman's fears.—Keep thy own secret, and begone.

Stuke. I'll not offend you, madam. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. Why opens not the earth, to swallow such a monster? Be conscience, then, his punisher, till Heaven, in mercy, gives him penitence, or dooms him in his justice. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY *and* BATES, *meeting.*

Bates. Where have you been?

Stuke. Fooling my time away—playing my tricks, like a tame monkey, to entertain a woman.—No matter where—I have been vexed and disappointed.—Tell me of Beverley; how bore he his last shock?

Bates. Like one, (so Dawson says) whose senses had been numbed with misery. When all was lost, he fixed his eyes upon the ground, and stood some time, with folded arms, stupid, and motionless; then snatching his sword, that hung against the wainscot, he sat him down, and, with a look of fixed attention, drew figures on the floor. At last, he started up, looked wild, and trembled; and, like a woman, seized with her sex's fits, laughed out aloud, while the tears trickled down his face—so left the room.

Stuke. Why, this was madness.

Bates. The madness of despair.

Stuke. We must confine him then—A prison would do well. [*A Knocking at the Door.*] Hark! that knocking may be his—Go that way down. [*Exit* BATES.] Who's there?

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. An enemy—an open, and avowed one.

Stuke. Why am I thus broke in upon? This house is mine, sir, and should protect me from insult and ill-manners.

Lew. Guilt has no place of sanctuary; wherever found, 'tis virtue's lawful game. The fox's hold, and tiger's den, are no security against the hunter.

Stuke. Your business, sir?

Lew. To tell you that I know you.—Why this confusion? That look of guilt and terror? Is Beverley awake, or has his wife told tales? The man, that dares like you, should have a soul to justify his deeds, and courage to confront accusers: not, with a coward's fear, to shrink beneath reproof.

Stuke. Who waits there? [*Aloud, and in Confusion.*

Lew. By Heaven, he dies, that interrupts us! [*Shutting the Door.*] You should have weighed your strength, sir; and then, instead of climbing to high fortune, the world had marked you for what you are —a little, paltry villain!

Stuke. You think I fear you.

Lew. I know you fear me—This is to prove it.—[*Pulls him by the Sleeve.*] You wanted privacy—A lady's presence took up your attention.—Now we are alone, sir.—Why, what a wretch! [*Flings him from him.*] The vilest insect in creation will turn, when trampled on; yet has this thing undone a man!—by cunning and mean arts undone him!—But we have found you, sir;—traced you through all your labyrinths. If you would save yourself, fall to confession, no mercy will be shown else.

Stuke. First, prove me what you think me; till then, your threatnings are in vain—And for this insult, vengeance may yet be mine.

Lew. Infamous coward! why, take it now then—[*Draws, and* STUKELY *retires.*] Alas, I pity thee!—Yet, that a wretch like this, should overcome a Beverley! It fills me with astonishment!—A wretch, so *mean of soul,* that even desperation cannot animate

him to look upon an enemy. You should not have thus soared, sir, unless, like others of your black profession, you had a sword, to keep the fools in awe, your villany has ruined.

Stuke. Villany! 'Twere best to curb this license of your tongue—for know, sir, while there are laws, this outrage on my reputation will not be borne with.

Lew. Laws! Dar'st thou seek shelter from the laws—those laws, which thou and thy infernal crew live in the constant violation of? Talk'st thou of reputation too, when, under friendship's sacred name, thou hast betrayed, robbed, and destroyed?

Stuke. Ay, rail at gaming—'tis a rich topic, and affords noble declamation.—Go, preach against it in the city—you'll find a congregation in every tavern. If they should laugh at you, fly to my lord, and sermonize it there: he'll thank you, and reform.

Lew. And will example sanctify a vice? No, wretch; the custom of my lord, or of the cit, that apes him, cannot excuse a breach of law, or make the gamester's calling reputable.

Stuke. Rail on, I say—But is this zeal for beggared Beverley? Is it for him, that I am treated thus? No; he and his wife might both have groaned in prison, had but the sister's fortune escaped the wreck, to have rewarded the disinterested love of honest Mr. Lewson.

Lew. How I detest thee for the thought! But thou art lost to every human feeling. Yet, let me tell thee, and may it wring thy heart, that though my friend is ruined by thy snares, thou hast, unknowingly, been kind to me.

Stuke. Have I? It was, indeed, unknowingly.

Lew. Thou hast assisted me in love—given me the merit that I wanted; since, but for thee, my Charlotte had not known 'twas her dear self I sighed for, and not her fortune.

Stuke. Thank me, and take her then.

Lew. And, as a brother to poor Beverley, I will pursue the robber, that has stripped him, and snatch him from his gripe.

Stuke. Then know, imprudent man, he is within my gripe; and should my friendship for him be slandered once again, the hand, that has supplied him, shall fall and crush him.

Lew. Why, now there's a spirit in thee! This is, indeed, to be a villain! But I shall reach thee yet—Fly where thou wilt, my vengeance shall pursue thee—And Beverley shall yet be saved—be saved from thee, thou monster! nor owe his rescue to his wife's dishonour. [*Exit.*

Stuke. [*Pausing.*] Then ruin has enclosed me.——Curse on my coward heart! I would be bravely villanous; but 'tis my nature to shrink at danger, and he has found me. Yet fear brings caution, and that, security—More mischief must be done, to hide the past—Look to yourself, officious Lewson—there may be danger stirring—How now, Bates?

Enter BATES.

Bates. What is the matter? 'Twas Lewson, and not Beverley, that left you—I heard him loud—You seem alarmed too.

Stuke. Ay, and with reason—We are discovered.

Bates. I feared as much, and, therefore, cautioned you; but you were peremptory.

Stuke. Thus fools talk ever; spending their idle breath on what is past, and trembling at the future. We must be active; Beverley, at worst, is but suspicious; but Lewson's genius, and his hate to me, will lay all open. Means must be found to stop him.

Bates. What means?

Stuke. Dispatch him——Nay, start not—Desperate occasions call for desperate deeds—We live but by his death.

Bates. You cannot mean it?

Stuke. I do, by Heaven!

Bates. Good night, then. [*Going.*

Stuke. Stay—I must be heard, then answered.—— Perhaps the motion was too sudden; and human weakness starts at murder, though strong necessity compels it. I have thought long of this, and my first feelings were like yours; a foolish conscience awed me, which, soon I conquered. The man, that would undo me, nature cries out, undo. Brutes know their foes by instinct; and, where superior force is given, they use it for destruction. Shall man do less? Lewson pursues us to our ruin! and shall we, with the means to crush him, fly from our hunter, or turn, and tear him? 'Tis folly, even to hesitate.

Bates. He has obliged me, and I dare not.

Stuke. Why, live to shame, then—to beggary and punishment. You would be privy to the deed, yet want the soul to act it.—Nay, more, had my designs been levelled at his fortune, you had stepped in, the foremost—And what is life, without its comforts?—Those, you would rob him of, and, by a lingering death, add cruelty to murder. Henceforth, adieu to half-made villains—There's danger in them. What you have got, is yours—keep it, and hide with it—I'll deal my future bounty to those that merit it.

Bates. What's the reward?

Stuke. Equal division of our gains. I swear it, and will be just.

Bates. Think of the means then.

Stuke. He's gone to Beverley's—Wait for him in the street—'Tis a dark night, and fit for mischief—A dagger would be useful.

Bates. No more.

Stuke. Consider the reward. When the deed's done, I have other business with you. Send Dawson to me.

Bates. Think it already done—and so, farewell.

[*Exit.*

Stuke. Why, farewell Lewson, then; and farewell to my fears. This night secures me—I'll wait the event within. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Street.—Stage darkened.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. How like an outcast do I wander! Loaded with every curse, that drives the soul to desperation! The midnight robber, as he walks his rounds, sees, by the glimmering lamp, my frantic looks, and dreads to meet me. Whither am I going? My home lies there; all that is dear on earth it holds too; yet, are the gates of death more welcome to me—I'll enter it no more—Who passes there? 'Tis Lewson—He meets me in a gloomy hour; and, memory tells me, he has been meddling with my fame.

Enter LEWSON.

Lew. Beverley! Well met. I have been busy in your affairs.

Bev. So I have heard, sir: and now I must thank you, as I ought.

Lew. To-morrow, I may deserve your thanks.—Late as it is, I go to Bates.—Discoveries are making, that an arch villain trembles at.

Bev. Discoveries are made, sir, that you shall tremble at. Where is this boasted spirit, this high demeanour, that was to call me to account? You say I have wronged my sister——Now say as much. But, first be ready for defence, as I am for resentment. [Draws.

Lew. What mean you?—I understand you not.

Bev. The coward's stale acquaintance! who, when he spreads foul calumny abroad, and dreads just vengeance on him, cries out, "What mean you? I understand you not."

Lew. Coward and calumny! Whence are those words? But I forgive, and pity you.

Bev. Your pity had been kinder to my fame: But you have traduced it—told a vile story to the public ear, that I have wronged my sister.

Lew. 'Tis false! Show me the man, that dares accuse me.

Bev. I thought you brave, and of a soul superior to low malice; but I have found you, and will have vengeance. This is no place for argument.

Lew. Nor shall it be for violence.—Imprudent man! who, in revenge for fancied injuries, would pierce the heart that loves him! But honest friendship acts from itself, unmoved by slander.—You know me not.

Bev. Yes, for the slanderer of my fame—who, under show of friendship, arraigns me of injustice; buzzing in every ear foul breach of trust, and family dishonour.

Lew. Have I done this? Who told you so?

Bev. The world—'Tis talked of every where.—— It pleased you to add threats too—You were to call me to account—Why, do it now, then: I shall be proud of such an arbiter.

Lew. Put up your sword, and know me better. I never injured you. The base suggestion comes from Stukely: I see him, and his aims.

Bev. What aims? I'll not conceal it—'twas Stukely that accused you.

Lew. To rid him of an enemy—Perhaps of two—He fears discovery, and frames a tale of falsehood, to ground revenge and murder on.

Bev. I must have proof of this.

Lew. Wait till to-morrow then.

Bev. I will.

Lew. Good night—I go to serve you——Forget what's past, as I do; and cheer your family with smiles—To-morrow may confirm them, and make all happy. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Pausing.*] How vile and how absurd is man! His boasted honour is but another name for pride, which easier bears the consciousness of guilt, than the world's just reproofs! But 'tis the fashion of the times; and in defence of falsehood and false honour, men die martyrs. I knew not that my nature was so bad. [*Stands musing.*

Enter BATES *and* JARVIS.

Jar. This way the noise was; and yonder's my poor master.

Bates. I heard him at high words with Lewson.—The cause I know not.

Jar. I heard him too. Misfortunes vex him.

Bates. Go to him, and lead him home.—But he comes this way—I'll not be seen by him. [*Exit.*

Bev. [*Starting.*] What fellow's that? [*Seeing* JARVIS.] Art thou a murderer, friend? Come, lead the way—I have a hand as mischievous as thine; a heart as desperate too——Jarvis! To bed, old man—the cold will chill thee.

Jar. Why are you wandering at this late hour? Your sword drawn too? For Heaven's sake, sheath it, sir—the sight distracts me.

Bev. Whose voice was that? [*Wildly.*

Jar. 'Twas mine, sir: Let me entreat you to give the sword to me.

Bev. Ay, take it—quickly take it—Perhaps I am not so cursed, but Heaven may have sent thee at this moment, to snatch me from perdition.

Jar. Then I am blessed.

Bev. Continue so, and leave me—my sorrows are *contagious.* No one is blessed, that's near me.

Jar. I came to seek you, sir.

Bev. And now thou hast found me, leave me—My thoughts are wild, and will not be disturbed.

Jar. Such thoughts are best disturbed. Alas, sir, forget your griefs, and let me lead you to her! The streets are dangerous.

Bev. Be wise, and leave me then. The night's black horrors are suited to my thoughts—These stones shall be my resting-place. [*Lies down.*] Here shall my soul brood o'er its miseries; till, with the fiends of hell, and guilty of the earth, I start and tremble at the morning's light.

Jar. Let patience, not despair, possess you—Rise, I beseech you—There's not a moment of your absence, that my poor mistress does not groan for.

Bev. Have I undone her, and is she still so kind? [*Starting up.*] It is too much—My brain can't hold it.—Oh, Jarvis, how desperate is that wretch's state, which, only death or madness can relieve!

Jar. Appease his mind, good Heaven, and give him resignation! Alas, sir! could beings in the other world perceive the events of this, how would your parents' blessed spirits grieve for you, even in Heaven!—Let me conjure you, by their honoured memories—by the sweet innocence of your yet helpless child, and by the ceaseless sorrows of my poor mistress, to rouse your manhood, and struggle with these griefs!

Bev. Thou virtuous, good old man! Thy tears, and thy entreaties have reached my heart, through all its miseries.

Jar. Hark! I hear voices—Come this way: we may reach home unnoticed.

Bev. Unnoticed, didst thou say? Alas! I dread no looks, but of those wretches I have made at home.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY *and* DAWSON.

Stuke. Come hither, Dawson; my limbs are on the rack, and my soul shivers in me, till this night's business be complete.—Tell mè thy thoughts; is Bates determined, or does he waver?

Daw. At first he seemed irresolute;—wished the employment had been mine; and muttered curses on his coward hand, that trembled at the deed.

Stuke. And did he leave you so?

Daw. No; we walked together, and, sheltered by the darkness, saw Beverley and Lewson, in warm debate. But soon they cooled, and then I left them, to hasten hither; but not till 'twas resolved Lewson should die.

Stuke. Thy words have given me life.—That quarrel too was fortunate; for, if my hopes deceive me not, it promises a grave to Beverley.

Daw. You misconceive me.—Lewson and he were friends.

Stuke. But my prolific brain shall make them enemies. If Lewson falls, he falls by Beverley—An upright jury shall decree it—Ask me no question; but do as I direct. This writ, [*Takes out a Pocket Book.*] for some days past I have treasured here, till a convenient time called for its use—That time is come.

Take it, and give it to an officer—It must be served this instant. [*Gives a Paper.*

Daw. On Beverley!

Stuke. Look at it.—'Tis for the sums that I have lent him.

Daw. Must he to prison then?

Stuke. I asked obedience, not replies. This night a gaol must be his lodging. 'Tis probable, he's not gone home yet.—Wait at his door, and see it executed.

Daw. Upon a beggar!—He has no means of payment.

Stuke. Dull, and insensible!—If Lewson dies, who was it killed him? Why, he, that was seen quarrelling with him: and I, that knew of Beverley's intents, arrested him in friendship—A little late, perhaps; but 'twas a virtuous act, and men will thank me for it. Now, sir, you understand me?

Daw. Most perfectly; and will about it.

Stuke. Haste, then; and when 'tis done, come back, and tell me.

Daw. Till then, farewell. [*Exit.*

Stuke. Now tell thy tale, fond wife! And, Lewson, if again thou canst insult me,

Not avarice now, but vengeance, fires my breast,
And one short hour must make me curs'd, or bless'd.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

STUKELY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter STUKELY, BATES, *and* DAWSON.

Bates. Poor Lewson!—But I told you enough last night. The thought of him is horrible to me.

Stuke. In the street, did you say? And no one near him?

Bates. By his own door; he was leading me to his house. I pretended business with him, and stabbed him to the heart, while he was reaching at the bell.

Stuke. And did he fall so suddenly?

Bates. The repetition pleases you, I see—I told you he fell without a groan.

Stuke. What heard you of him this morning?

Bates. That the watch found him in their rounds, and alarmed the servants. I mingled with the crowd just now, and saw him dead in his own house.—The sight terrified me.

Stuke. Away with terrors, till his ghost rise, and accuse us. We have no living enemy to fear, unless 'tis Beverley; and him we have lodged safe in prison.

Bates. Must he be murdered too?

Stuke. No; I have a scheme to make the law his murderer. At what hour did Lewson fall?

Bates. The clock struck twelve, as I turned, to leave him—'Twas a melancholy bell, I thought, tolling for his death.

Stuke. The time was lucky for us—Beverley was arrested at one, you say? [*To* DAWSON.

Daw. Exactly.

Stuke. Good. We'll talk of this presently. The women were with him, I think?

Daw. And old Jarvis. I would have told you of them last night, but your thoughts were too busy.—'Tis well you have a heart of stone; the tale would melt it else.

Stuke. Out with it, then.

Daw. I traced him to his lodgings; and, pretending pity for his misfortunes, kept the door open, while the officers seized him. 'Twas a damned deed!—but no matter—I followed my instructions.

Stuke. And what said he?

Daw. He upbraided me with treachery, called you a villain, acknowledged the sums you had lent him, and submitted to his fortune.

Stuke. And the women——

Daw. For a few minutes, astonishment kept them silent. They looked wildly at one another, while the tears streamed down their cheeks. But rage and fury soon gave them words; and then, in the very bitterness of despair, they cursed me, and the monster, that had employed me.

Stuke. And you bore it with philosophy?

Daw. Till the scene changed, and then I melted. I ordered the officers to take away their prisoner. The women shrieked, and would have followed him; but we forbade them. 'Twas then they fell upon their knees, the wife fainted, the sister raving, and both, with all the eloquence of misery, endeavouring to soften us. I never felt compassion till that moment; and, had the officers been moved like me, we had left the business undone, and fled with curses on ourselves. But their hearts were steeled by custom. The tears of beauty, and the pangs of affection, were beneath their pity. They tore him from their arms,

and lodged him in prison, with only Jarvis to comfort him.

Stuke. There let him lie, till we have farther business with him—But how to proceed will require time and thought.—Come along with me; the room within is fitted for privacy—But no compassion, sir. [*To* DAWSON.]—We want leisure for't—This way.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

BEVERLEY'S *Lodgings.*

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. No news of Lewson yet?

Char. None. He went out early, and knows not what has happened.

Mrs. Bev. The clock strikes eight—I'll wait no longer.

Char. Stay but till Jarvis comes. He has sent twice, to stop us till we see him.

Mrs. Bev. Oh, what a night was last night! I would not pass another such to purchase worlds by it—My poor Beverley too! What must he have felt? —The very thought distracts me!—To have him torn at midnight from me! A loathsome prison his habitation! A cold damp room his lodging! The bleak winds, perhaps, blowing upon his pillow! No fond wife, to lull him to his rest! and no reflections but to wound and tear him!—'Tis too horrible!—I wanted love for him, or they had not forced him from me.—They should have parted soul and body first.—I was too tame.

Char. You must not talk so.—All that we could

we did; and Jarvis did the rest—The faithful creature will give him comfort. See where he comes!—His looks are cheerful too!

Enter JARVIS.

Mrs. Bev. Are tears then cheerful? Alas, he weeps! Speak to him, Charlotte.

Char. How does your master, Jarvis?

Jar. I am old and foolish, madam; and tears will come before my words—But don't you weep; [*To* MRS. BEVERLEY.] I have a tale of joy for you.

Mrs. Bev. Say but he's well, and I have joy enough.

Jar. All shall be well—I have news for him, that will make his poor heart bound again—Fie upon old age!—How childish it makes me!—I have a tale of joy for you, and my tears drown it.

Mrs. Bev. What is it, Jarvis?

Jar. Your uncle, madam, died yesterday.

Mrs. Bev. My uncle!—Oh, Heavens!

Char. How heard you of his death?

Jar. His steward came express, madam—I met him in the street, inquiring for your lodgings——I should not rejoice, perhaps—but he was old, and my poor master a prisoner—Now he shall live again—Oh, 'tis a brave fortune!

Char. Where left you the steward?

Jar. I would not bring him hither, to be a witness of your distresses; and, besides, I wanted, once before I die, to be the messenger of joy to you.

Char. I have no joy, till my poor brother shares it with me. How did he pass the night, Jarvis?

Jar. Like a man dreaming of death and horrors—When they led him to his cell, he flung himself upon a wretched bed, and lay speechless till day-break. I spoke to him, but he would not hear me; and when *I persisted,* he raised his hand at me, and knit his brow so—I thought he would have struck me. I

bid him be of comfort—Begone, old wretch, says he —My wife! my child! my sister! I have undone them all, and will know no comfort! Then falling upon his knees, he imprecated curses upon himself.

Mrs. Bev. This is too horrible!—But you did not leave him so?

Jar. I had not the heart, madam. By degrees, I brought him to himself. A shower of tears came to his relief; and he called me his kindest friend, and begged forgiveness of me like a child.—My heart throbbed so, I could not speak to him. He turned from me for a minute or two, and suppressing a few bitter sighs, inquired after his wretched family.

Mrs. Bev. What a tale is this!—But we have staid too long.

Jar. We'll away this moment.

Mrs. Bev. To comfort him, or die with him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Prison.

BEVERLEY *is discovered sitting.*

Bev. Why, there's an end then; I have judged deliberately, and the result is death! How the self-murderer's account may stand, I know not. But this I know—the load of hateful life oppresses me too much—The horrors of my soul are more than I can bear—[*Offers to kneel.*] Father of mercy!—I cannot pray—Despair has laid his iron hand upon me, and sealed me for perdition—Conscience! conscience! thy clamours are too loud!—Here's that shall silence thee. [*Takes a Phial out of his* Pocket, and looks at it,]

Thou art most friendly to the miserable. Come, then, thou cordial for sick minds—Come to my heart. [*Drinks.*] Oh, that the grave would bury memory, as well as body! For, if the soul sees and feels the sufferings of those dear ones it leaves behind, the Everlasting has no vengeance to torment it deeper—I'll think no more on't—Reflection comes too late—Once there was a time for't—but now 'tis past.——Who's there?

Enter JARVIS.

Jar. One, that hoped to see you with better looks—Why do you turn so from me? I have brought comfort with me. And see who comes, to give it welcome!

Bev. My wife and sister! Why, 'tis but one pang more, then, and farewell, world! [*Aside.*

Enter MRS. BEVERLEY *and* CHARLOTTE.

Mrs. Bev. Where is he? [*Runs and embraces him.*] Oh, I have him! I have him! And now they shall never part us more—I have news, love, to make you happy for ever——Alas, he hears us not!——Speak to me, love. I have no heart to see you thus.

Bev. This is a sad place!

Mrs. Bev. We came to take you from it—to tell you the world goes well again—that Providence has seen our sorrows, and sent the means to help them—Your uncle died yesterday.

Bev. My uncle!—No, do not say so!—Oh, I am sick at heart!

Mrs. Bev. Indeed!—I meant to bring you comfort.

Bev. Tell me he lives, then—If you would bring me comfort, tell me he lives!

Mrs. Bev. And if I did—I have no power to raise *the dead*——He died yesterday.

Bev. And I am heir to him?

Jar. To his whole estate, sir——But bear it patiently—pray, bear it patiently.

Bev. Well, well—[*Pausing.*] Why, fame says I am rich then?

Mrs. Bev. And truly so——Why do you look so wildly?

Bev. Do I? The news was unexpected. But has he left me all?

Jar. All, all, sir—He could not leave it from you.

Bev. I am sorry for it.

Mrs. Bev. Why are you disturbed so?

Bev. Has death no terrors in it?

Mrs. Bev. Not an old man's death. Yet, if it troubles you, I wish him living.

Bev. And I, with all my heart. For I have a tale to tell, shall turn you into stone; or, if the power of speech remain, you shall kneel down and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! what tale is this? And why are we to curse you?—I'll bless you for ever.

Bev. No; I have deserved no blessings. The world holds not such another wretch. All this large fortune, this second bounty of Heaven, that might have healed our sorrows, and satisfied our utmost hopes, in a cursed hour I sold last night.

Mrs. Bev. Impossible!

Bev. That devil, Stukely, with all hell to aid him, tempted me to the deed. To pay fale debts of honour, and to redeem past errors, I sold the reversion —Sold it for a scanty sum, and lost it among villains.

Char. Why, farewell all then!

Bev. Liberty and life—Come, kneel and curse me.

Mrs. Bev. Then hear me, Heaven! [*Kneels.*] Look down with mercy on his sorrows! Give softness to his looks, and quiet to his heart! On me, on me.

if misery must be the lot of either, multiply misfortunes! I'll bear them patiently, so he is happy! These hands shall toil for his support! These eyes be lifted up for hourly blessings on him! And every duty of a fond and faithful wife be doubly done, to cheer and comfort him!—So hear me! So reward me! [*Rises.*

Bev. I would kneel too, but that offended Heaven would turn my prayers into curses. For I have done a deed to make life horrible to you——

Mrs. Bev. What deed?

Jar. Ask him no questions, madam—This last misfortune has hurt his brain. A little time will give him patience.

Enter STUKELY.

Bev. Why is this villain here?

Stuke. To give you liberty and safety. There, madam, is his discharge. [*Giving a Paper to* MRS. BEVERLEY.] The arrest last night was meant in friendship; but came too late.

Char. What mean you, sir?

Stuke. The arrest was too late, I say; I would have kept his hands from blood, but was too late.

Mrs. Bev. His hands from blood!—Whose blood?

Stuke. From Lewson's blood.

Char. No, villain! Yet what of Lewson? Speak quickly.

Stuke. You are ignorant then! I thought I heard the murderer at confession.

Char. What murderer?—And who is murdered? Not Lewson?—Say he lives, and I'll kneel and worship you.

Stuke. In pity, so I would; but that the tongues of all cry murder. I came in pity, not in malice; to save the brother, not kill the sister. Your Lewson's dead,

Char. Oh, horrible!

Bev. Silence, I charge you—Proceed, sir.

Stuke. No. Justice may stop the tale—and here's an evidence.

Enter BATES.

Bates. The news, I see, has reached you. But take comfort, madam. [*To* CHARLOTTE.] There's one without, inquiring for you.—Go to him, and lose no time.

Char. O misery! misery! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bev. Follow her, Jarvis. If it be true, that Lewson's dead, her grief may kill her.

Bates. Jarvis must stay here, madam. I have some questions for him.

Stuke. Rather let him fly. His evidence may crush his master.

Bev. Why ay; this looks like management.

Bates. He found you quarrelling with Lewson in the streets last night. [*To* BEVERLEY.

Mrs. Bev. No; I am sure he did not.

Jar. Or if I did——

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis false, old man—They had no quarrel; there was no cause for quarrel.

Bev. Let him proceed, I say—Oh! I am sick! sick!—Reach a chair. [*He sits down.*

Mrs. Bev. If Lewson's dead, you killed him not.

Enter DAWSON.

Stuke. Who sent for Dawson?

Bates. 'Twas I—We have a witness too you little think of—Without there!

Stuke. What witness?

Bates. A right one. Look at him.

Enter LEWSON *and* CHARLOTTE.

Stuke. Lewson! O villains! villains! [*To* BATES *and* DAWSON.

Mrs. Bev. Risen from the dead! Why, this is unexpected happiness!

Char. Or is it his ghost? [*To* STUKELY.] That sight would please you, sir.

Jar. What riddle's this?

Bev. Be quick and tell it—My minutes are but few.

Mrs. Bev. Alas! why so? You shall live long, and happily.

Lew. While shame and punishment shall rack that viper. [*Pointing to* STUKELY.] The tale is short—I was too busy in his secrets, and therefore doomed to die. Bates, to prevent the murder, undertook it—I kept aloof to give it credit.——

Char. And gave me pangs unutterable.

Lew. I felt them all, and would have told you—But vengeance wanted ripening. The villain's scheme was but half executed. The arrest by Dawson followed the supposed murder—And now, depending on his once wicked associates, he comes to fix the guilt on Beverley.

Mrs. Bev. Oh! execrable wretch!

Bates. Dawson and I are witnesses of this.

Lew. And of a thousand frauds. His fortune ruined by sharpers and false dice; and Stukely sole contriver and possessor of all. How does my friend? [*To* BEVERLEY.

Bev. Why, well. Who's he that asks me?

Mrs. Bev. 'Tis Lewson, love—Why do you look so at him?

Bev. They told me he was murdered. [*Wildly.*

Mrs. Bev. Ay; but he lives, to save us.

Bev. Lend me your hand—The room turns round.

Mrs. Bev. O Heaven!

Lew. This villain here disturbs him. Remove him from his sight—And, for your lives, see that you guard him. [STUKELY *is taken off, by* DAWSON *and* BATES.] How is it, sir?

Bev. 'Tis here—and here. [*Pointing to his Head and Heart.*] And now it tears me!

Mrs. Bev. You feel convulsed too——What is't disturbs you? How his eyes flame!

Bev. A furnace rages in this heart——Down, restless flames!—[*Laying his Hand on his Heart.*] down to your native hell——There you shall rack me—Oh! for a pause from pain!—Where's my wife?—Can you forgive me, love?

Mrs. Bev. Alas! for what?

Bev. For meanly dying.

Mrs. Bev. No—do not say it.

Bev. As truly as my soul must answer it.——Had Jarvis staid this morning, all had been well. But pressed by shame—pent in a prison—tormented with my pangs for you—driven to despair and madness—I took the advantage of his absence, corrupted the poor wretch, he left to guard me, and—swallowed poison.

Char. Dreadful and cruel!

Bev. Ay, most accursed—And now I go to my account. Bend me, and let me kneel. [*Kneels.*] I'll pray for you too. Thou Power, that madest me, hear me! If for a life of frailty, and this too hasty deed of death, thy justice dooms me, here I acquit the sentence. But if enthroned in mercy where thou sittest, thy pity has beheld me, send me a gleam of hope; that in these last and bitter moments my soul may taste of comfort! and for these mourners here, Oh! let their lives be peaceful, and their deaths happy!—Now I die. [*They lift him to the Chair.*

Mrs. Bev. Restore him, Heaven! Stretch forth thy arm omnipotent, and snatch him from the grave!—Oh, save him! save him! or let me die too.

Bev. No; live, I charge you.—We have a little one.—Though I have left him, you will not leave him.—To Lewson's kindness I bequeath him.—Is not this Charlotte?—We have lived in love, though I have wronged you.—Can you forgive me, Charlotte?

Char. Forgive you! Oh, my poor brother!

Bev. Oh! for a few short moments, to tell you how my heart bleeds for you—That even now, thus dying as I am, dubious and fearful of hereafter, my bosom pang is for your miseries! Support her, Heaven! —And now I go——Oh, mercy! mercy! [*Dies.*

Lew. Then all is over—How is it, madam!—My poor Charlotte too!

Char. Tears! tears! why fall you not—O wretched sister!—Speak to her, Lewson——Her grief is speechless.

Lew. Remove her from this sight. Sorrow like hers forbids complaint——Words are for lighter griefs—Some ministering angel bring her peace! [CHARLOTTE *leads her off.*] And thou, poor breathless corpse, may thy departed soul have found the rest it prayed for! Save but one error, and this last fatal deed, thy life was lovely. Let frailer minds take warning; and from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

THE END.

ROMAN FATHER.

[illegible] THEY ASK THEE NOT TO PLUNGE THE SWORD INTO THE BREAST THOU LOVST

ACT II. SCENE I.

[illegible] Lib by [illegible] [illegible]

THE

ROMAN FATHER;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

William Whitehead, the author of this tragedy, was the son of a tradesman at Cambridge. He was admitted a scholar of Clare Hall, in that university, and afterwards obtained a fellowship.

During the years 1754, 1755, and 1756, he accompanied the young Lords Nuneham and Villers, sons of the Earls of Harcourt and Jersey, in their travels. Through the patronage of these noblemen, he was, on his return, appointed Register and Secretary of the Order of the Bath.

On the death of Colley Cibber, Mr. Whitehead became Poet Laureate.—Besides his Odes, he was author of other poetical pieces, and several dramas. He died at the age of seventy, in the year 1785.

"The Roman Father" is founded on a well known event in the early part of Roman History—a combat between the Horatii and the Curiatii.

The great Corneille had produced a tragedy on this subject some years before the present tragedy was written:—the English author falls infinitely beneath the French, as a poet and dramatist; though, in the character of a Roman historian, he has been perhaps more simple and faithful in the relation of facts.

But that Whitehead should omit to introduce the lover on his scene is very surprising! In the "Horace" of Corneille, Curiatius is an important character; and, though his early death in the play precludes him from

so large a share in the action, as that given to his rival in arms; still, as far as courage, joined with sensibility and tenderness, is superior to that rugged bravery, which never feels beyond its own selfish glory,—so is Curiatius, the lover in the French tragedy, superior, both as a man and a hero, to Publius Horatius, the brother.

Although "The Roman Father" is not an exact translation from "Horace," yet, as some of the most important scenes of the first, are evidently copied from the last named play, it may be amusing to the reader to know what Corneille, in his examination of his own tragedy, has said of those parts of it which Whitehead has particularly adopted in the following pages.

The French poet commences his examination by acquainting his reader, that the drama of "Horace" would have been considered as the best among all his works, if the two last acts had equalled the three preceding. The reader of the English play will assuredly find a deficiency of interest towards the end of the production; and therefore the English author is, in this failure, implicated with his original.

Corneille laments, that, with all his care to describe the virtues of the brother, Horatius, as ferocious, he yet had not the art to give sufficient preparation to the audience, for the fatal effects of this young man's patriotism in the last act. Such may be also found Whitehead's failing.

Corneille considers it as a blemish in his play, that *this event* in the last act should form a double ac-

tion, by forcing young Horatius into a second peril, after having nobly escaped the first. He calls it, besides, a meaner peril—a private quarrel, after a combat for the public weal—the fighting with a woman, after having conquered a band of heroes.

This incident it was in vain for the English writer to reject, unless he had possessed the invention to have given five acts to his play without it; and thus to have postponed the battle of Publius with the Curiatii, as Corneille says it ought to have been delayed, till the catastrophe. But as that incident, which is now introduced at the conclusion of the piece, is purely historical, and proceeds exactly from the previous grand event, it surely should be included in the tragedy, though it is to be regretted that the greater occurrence precedes the less.

The author of " Horace" shows little gallantry to the ladies, in this his examination of the work, notwithstanding he was a Frenchman. He says, that the actress, who performed Horatia, brought on him the unjust reproach of shedding blood in the sight of an audience; for that it was set down in her part to run from her brother, with the usual cowardice of her sex, the moment he drew his sword; by which means her supposed wound would have been received behind the scenes.

In another place, he congratulates himself for having made a female the bearer of the false intelligence given in respect to the defeat of Publius; saying,—it was proper, on that occasion, to make use of the common impatience, and common misapprehension of *a woman.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HORATIUS	*Mr. Farren.*
TULLUS HOSTILIUS	*Mr. Aickin.*
VALERIUS	*Mr. Davies.*
PUBLIUS	*Mr. Pope.*
VOLSCINIUS	
VALERIA	*Mrs. Morton.*
HORATIA	*Miss Brunton.*

CITIZENS, SOLDIERS, &c. &c.

SCENE—Rome.

THE

ROMAN FATHER.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room in HORATIUS's *House.*—VOLSCINIUS *crosses the Stage,* HORATIA *following.*

Horatia. Stay, soldier. As you parted from my father,
Something I overheard of near concern,
But all imperfectly. Said you not, Alba
Was on the brink of fate, and Rome determin'd
This day to crush her haughty rival's power,
Or perish in th' attempt?

Vol. 'Twas so resolv'd,
This morning, lady, ere I left the camp.
Our heroes are tir'd out with ling'ring war,
And half-unmeaning fight.

Horatia. Then this day
Is fix'd for death or conquest? [*He bows.*] To me death,
Whoever conquers! [*Aside.*] I detain you, sir.
Commend me to my brothers; say, I wish——
But wherefore should I wish? The gods will crown
Their virtues with the just success they merit——
Yet let me ask you, sir——

Vol. My duty, lady,
Commands me hence. Ere this they have engag'd.

And conquest's self would lose its charms to me,
Should I not share the danger.

[*As* VOLSCINIUS *goes out,*

Enter VALERIA, *who looks first on him, and then on* HORATIA.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, wherefore wilt thou court
The means to be unhappy? Still inquiring,
Still more to be undone. I heard it too;
And flew to find thee, ere the fatal news
Had hurt thy quiet, that thou might'st have learnt it
From a friend's tongue, and dress'd in gentler terms.

Horatia. Oh, I am lost, Valeria! lost to virtue.
Ev'n while my country's fate, the fate of Rome,
Hangs on the conqueror's sword, this breast can feel
A softer passion, and divide its cares.
Alba to me is Rome. Wouldst thou believe it?
I would have sent by him, thou saw'st departing,
Kind wishes to my brothers; but my tongue
Denied its office, and this rebel heart
Ev'n dreaded their success. Oh, Curiatius!
Why art thou there, or why an enemy?

Valeria. Forbear this self-reproach; he is thy husband,
And who can blame thy fears? If fortune make him
A while thy country's foe, she cannot cancel
Vows register'd above. What tho' the priest
Had not confirm'd it at the sacred altar;
Yet were your hearts united, and that union
Approv'd by each consenting parent's choice.
Your brothers lov'd him as a friend, a brother;
And all the ties of kindred pleaded for him,
And still must plead, whate'er our heroes teach us,
Of patriot strength. Our country may demand
We should be wretched, and we must obey;
But never can require us not to feel,
That we are miserable: nature there
Will give the lie to virtue.

Horatia. True; yet sure

A Roman virgin should be more than woman.
Are we not early taught to mock at pain,
And look on danger with undaunted eyes?
But what are dangers, what the ghastliest form
Of death itself?—Oh, were I only bid
To rush into the Tiber's foaming wave,
Or from the height
Of yon Tarpeian rock, whose giddy steep
Has turn'd me pale with horror at the sight,
I'd think the task were nothing! but to bear
These strange vicissitudes of tort'ring pain,
To fear, to doubt, and to despair as I do——

Valeria. And why despair! Have we so idly learn'd
The noblest lessons of our infant days,
Our trust above? Does there not still remain
The wretch's last retreat, the gods, Horatia?
'Tis from their awful wills our evils spring,
And at their altars may we find relief.
Say, shall we thither?—Look not thus dejected,
But answer me. A confidence in them,
Ev'n in this crisis of our fate, will calm
Thy troubled soul, and fill thy breast with hope.

Horatia. Talk not of hope; the wretch on yonder plain,
Who hears the victor's threats, and sees his sword
Impending o'er him, feels no surer fate,
Tho' less delay'd than mine. What should I hope?
That Alba conquer?—Curs'd be every thought
Which looks that way! The shrieks of captive matrons
Sound in my ears!

Valeria. Forbear, forbear, Horatia;
Nor fright me with the thought. Rome cannot fall.
Think on the glorious battles she has fought;
Has she once fail'd, tho' oft expos'd to danger?
And has not her immortal founder promis'd
That she should rise the mistress of the world!

Horatia. And if Rome conquers, then Horatia dies.

Valeria. Why wilt thou form vain images of horror,

Industrious to be wretched? Is it then
Become impossible that Rome should triumph,
And Curiatius live? He must, he shall;
Protecting gods shall spread their shields around him,
And love shall combat in Horatia's cause.

Horatia. Think'st thou so meanly of him?—No, Valeria,
His soul's too great to give me such a trial;
Or could it ever come, I think, myself,
Thus lost in love, thus abject as I am,
I should despise the slave, who dar'd survive
His country's ruin. Ye immortal powers!
I love his fame too well, his spotless honour,
At least I hope I do, to wish him mine
On any terms which he must blush to own. [*Shout.*

Horatius. [*Without.*] What ho! Vindicius.

Horatia. What means that shout?—Might we not ask, Valeria?
Didst thou not wish me to the temple!—Come,
I will attend thee thither; the kind gods
Perhaps may ease this throbbing heart, and spread
At least a temporary calm within.

Valeria. Alas, Horatia! 'tis not to the temple
That thou wouldst fly; the shout alone alarms thee.
But do not thus anticipate thy fate;
Why shouldst thou learn each chance of varying war?
Stay but an hour, perhaps, and thou shalt know
The whole at once.—I'll send—I'll fly myself
To ease thy doubts, and bring thee news of joy.

Horatia. Again, and nearer too—I must attend thee.

Valeria. Hark! 'tis thy father's voice, he comes to cheer thee.

Enter HORATIUS *and* VALERIUS.

Horatius. [*Entering.*] News, from the camp, my child!
'Save you, sweet maid! [Seeing VALERIA.

Your brother brings the tidings, for, alas!
I am no warrior now; my useless age,
Far from the paths of honour loiters here
In sluggish inactivity at home.
Yet I remember———
Horatia. You'll forgive us, sir,
If with impatience we expect the tidings.
Horatius. I had forgot; the thoughts of what I was,
Engross'd my whole attention.—Pray, young soldier,
Relate it for me; you beheld the scene,
And can report it justly.
Valerius. Gentle lady,
The scene was piteous, though its end be peace.
Horatia. Peace! O, my fluttering heart! by what kind means?
Valerius. 'Twere tedious, lady, and unnecessary
To paint the disposition of the field;
Suffice it, we were arm'd, and front to front
The adverse legions heard the trumpet's sound:
But vain was the alarm, for motionless,
And wrapt in thought they stop'd; the kindred ranks
Had caught each other's eyes, nor dar'd to lift
The fault'ring spear against the breast they lov'd.
Again th' alarm was given, and now they seem'd
Preparing to engage, when once again
They hung their drooping heads, and inward mourn'd;
Then nearer drew, and at the third alarm,
Casting their swords and useless shields aside,
Rush'd to each other's arms.
Horatius. 'Twas so, just so,
(Tho' I was then a child, yet I have heard
My mother, weeping, oft relate the story)
Soft pity touch'd the breasts of mighty chiefs,
Romans and Sabines, when the matrons rush'd
Between their meeting armies, and oppos'd
Their helpless infants, and their heaving breasts
To their advancing swords, and bade them there

Sheath all their vengeance.—But I interrupt you—
Proceed, Valerius, they would hear th' event.
—And yet, methinks, the Albans—pray go on.

Valerius. Our king Hostilius from a rising mound
Beheld the tender interview, and join'd
His friendly tears with theirs; then swift advanc'd,
Ev'n to the thickest press, and cry'd, My friends,
If thus we love, why are we enemies?
Shall stern ambition, rivalship of power,
Subdue the soft humanity within us?
Are we not join'd by every tie of kindred?
And can we find no method to compose
These jars of honour, these nice principles
Of virtue, which infest the noblest mind?

Horatius. How was it receiv'd?

Valerius. As he himself could wish, with eager transport.
In short, the Roman and the Alban chiefs
In council have determin'd, that since glory
Must have her victims, and each rival state,
Aspiring to dominion, scorns to yield,
From either army shall be chose three champions,
To fight the cause alone, and whate'er state
Shall prove superior, there acknowledg'd power
Shall fix th' imperial seat, and both unite
Beneath one common head.

Horatia. Kind Heaven, I thank thee!
Bless'd be the friendly grief, that touch'd their souls!
Bless'd be Hostilius, for the generous counsel!
Bless'd be the meeting chiefs! and bless'd the tongue,
Which brings the gentle tidings!

Valerius. Now, Horatia,
Your idle fears are o'er.

Horatia. Yet one remains.
Who are the champions? Are they yet elected?
Has Rome———

Valerius. The Roman chiefs now meet in council,
And ask the presence of the sage Horatius.

Horatius. [*After a pause.*] But stil methinks, I like not this, to trust
The Roman cause to such a slender hazard—
Three combatants!——'tis dangerous——
Horatia. [*In a Fright.*] My father!
Horatius. I might, perhaps, prevent it——
Horatia. Do not, sir,
Oppose the kind decree.
Valerius. Rest satisfied,
Sweet lady, 'tis so solemnly agreed to,
Not even Horatius's advice can shake it.
Horatius. And yet, 'twere well to end these civil broils:
The neighb'ring states might take advantage of them.
—'Would I were young again! How glorious
Were death in such a cause!—And yet, who knows
Some of my boys may be selected for it——
Perhaps may conquer——Grant me that, kind gods,
And close my eyes in transport!—Come, Valerius,
I'll but despatch some necessary orders,
And straight attend thee.——Daughter, if thou lov'st
Thy brothers, let thy prayers be pour'd to Heav'n,
That one at least may share the glorious task. [*Exit.*
Valerius. Rome cannot trust her cause to worthier hands.
They bade me greet you, lady. [*To* HORATIA.
Horatia. [*With some Hesitation.*] My brothers, gentle sir, you said were well.
Saw you their noble friends, the Curiatii?
The truce, perhaps, permitted it.
Valerius. Yes, lady,
I left them jocund in your brothers' tent,
Like friends, whom envious storms a while had parted,
Joying to meet again.
Horatia. Sent they no message?

Valerius. None, fair one, but such general salutation
As friends would bring unbid.
Horatia. Said Caius nothing?
Valerius. Caius?
Horatia. Ay, Caius; did he mention me?
Valerius. 'Twas slightly, if he did, and 'scapes me now——
O yes, I do remember, when your brother
Ask'd him, in jest, if he had aught to send,
To sooth a love-sick maid (your pardon, lady)
He smil'd, and cry'd, Glory's the soldier's mistress.
Horatia. Sir, you'll excuse me—something of importance———
My father may have business——Oh, Valeria!
[*Aside to* VALERIA.
Talk to thy brother, know the fatal truth
I dread to hear, and let me learn to die,
If Curiatius has indeed forgot me. [*Exit.*
Valerius. She seems disorder'd!
Valeria. Has she not cause?
Can you administer the baneful potion,
And wonder at th' effect?
Valerius. You talk in riddles!
Valeria. They're riddles, brother, which your heart unfolds,
Though you affect surprise. Was Curiatius
Indeed so cold? Poor shallow artifice,
The trick of hopeless love! I saw it plainly.
Yet what could you propose? An hour's uneasiness
To poor Horatia; for be sure by that time
She sees him, and your deep-wrought schemes are air.
Valerius. What could I do? this peace has ruin'd me;
While war continued, I had gleams of hope,
Some lucky chance might rid me of my rival,

And time effaee his image in her breast.
But now——

Valeria. Yes, now you must resolve to follow
Th' advice I gave you first, and root this passion
Entirely from your heart; for know, she dotes,
Ev'n to distraction dotes on Curiatius;
And every fear she felt, while danger threaten'd,
Will now endear him more.

Valerius. Cruel Valeria,
You triumph in my pain!

Valeria. By Heaven, I do not!
I only would extirpate every thought
Which gives you pain, nor leave one foolish wish
For hope to dally with.

Valerius. I own my error——yet once more assist me—
Nay, turn not from me, by my soul I meant not
To interrupt their loves,—Yet, should some accident,
'Tis not impossible, divide their hearts,
I might, perhaps, have hope: therefore till marriage
Cuts off all commerce, and confirms me wretched,
Be it thy task, my sister, with fond stories,
Such as our ties of blood may countenance,
To paint thy brother's worth, his power in arms,
His favour with the king: then mention many a fair,
No matter whom, that sighs to call you sister.

Valeria. Well, well, away—Yet tell me, ere you go,
How did this lover talk of his Horatia?

Valerius. Why will you mention that ungrateful subject?
Think what you've heard me breathe a thousand times,
When my whole soul dissolv'd in tenderness;
'Twas rapture all; what lovers only feel,
Or can express when felt. He had been here,
But sudden orders from the camp detain'd him.
Farewell; Horatius waits me—but remember,

My life, nay, more than life, depends on you. [*Exit.*

Valeria. Poor youth! he knows not how I feel his anguish,
Yet dare not seem to pity what I feel.
How shall I act betwixt this friend and brother!
Should she suspect his passion, she may doubt
My friendship too; and yet to tell it her
Were to betray his cause. No, let my heart
With the same blameless caution still proceed;
To each inclining most as most distrest:
Be just to both, and leave to Heav'n the rest! [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in the House of HORATIUS.

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia. Alas, how easily do we admit
The things we wish were true! yet sure, Valeria,
This seeming negligence of Curiatius
Betrays a secret coldness at the heart.
May not long absence, or the charms of war,
Have damp'd, at least, if not effac'd, his passion?
I know not what to think.

Valeria. Think, my Horatia,
That you're a lover, and have learn'd the art
To raise vain scruples, and torment yourself
With every distant hint of fancied ill.
Your Curiatius still remains the same.
My brother idly trifled with your passion,
Or *might*, perhaps, unheedingly relate
What you too nearly feel. But see, your father!

Horatia. He seems transported! sure some happy news
Has brought him back thus early. Oh, my heart!
I long, yet dread, to ask him. Speak, Valeria.

Enter HORATIUS.

Valeria. You're soon return'd, my lord.
Horatius. Return'd, Valeria!
My life, my youth's return'd, I tread in air!
—I cannot speak; my joy's too great for utterance.
—Oh, I could weep!—my sons, my sons are chosen
Their country's combatants; not one, but all!
Horatia. My brothers, said you, sir?
Horatius. All three, my child,
All three are champions in the cause of Rome.
Oh, happy state of fathers! thus to feel
New warmth revive, and springing life renew'd
Even on the margin of the grave!
Valeria. The time
Of combat, is it fix'd?
Horatius. This day, this hour
Perhaps decides our doom.
Valeria. And is it known
With whom they must engage?
Horatius. Not yet, Valeria;
But with impatience we expect each moment
The resolutions of the Alban senate.
And soon may they arrive, that ere we quit
Yon hostile field, the chiefs who dar'd oppose
Rome's rising glories, may with shame confess
The gods protect the empire they have rais'd.
Where are thy smiles, Horatia? Whence proceeds
This sullen silence, when my thronging joys
Want words to speak them? Pr'ythee, talk of empire,
Talk of those darlings of my soul, thy brothers.
Call them whate'er wild fancy can suggest,
Their country's pride, the boast of future times,
The dear defence, the guardian gods of Rome!—

By Heav'n, thou stand'st unmov'd, nor feels thy breast
The charms of glory, the extatic warmth
Which beams new life, and lifts us nearer Heaven!
Horatia. My gracious father, with surprise and transport
I heard the tidings, as becomes your daughter.
And like your daughter, were our sex allow'd
The noble privilege which man usurps,
Could die with pleasure in my country's cause.
But yet, permit a sister's weakness, sir,
To feel the pangs of nature, and to dread
The fate of those she loves, however glorious.
And sure they cannot all survive a conflict
So desperate as this.
Horatius. Survive! By Heaven,
I could not hope that they should all survive.
No; let them fall. If from their glorious deaths
Rome's freedom spring, I shall be nobly paid
For every sharpest pang the parent feels.
Had I a thousand sons, in such a cause
I could behold them bleeding at my feet,
And thank the gods with tears!

Enter PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

Pub. My father! [*Offering to kneel.*
Horatius. Hence!
Kneel not to me—stand off; and let me view
At distance, and with reverential awe,
The champion of my country!—Oh, my boy!
That I should live to this—my soul's too full;
Let this, and this speak for me.—Bless thee, bless thee! [*Embracing him.*
But wherefore art thou absent from the camp?
Where are thy brothers? Has the Alban state
Determin'd? Is the time of combat fix'd?
Pub. Think not, my lord, that filial reverence,
However due, had drawn me from the field,

Where nobler duty calls; a patriot's soul
Can feel no humbler ties, nor knows the voice
Of kindred, when his country claims his aid.
It was the king's command I should attend you,
Else had I stay'd till wreaths immortal grac'd
My brows, and made thee proud indeed to see
Beneath thy roof, and bending for thy blessing,
Not thine, Horatius, but the son of Rome!

Horatius. Oh, virtuous pride!—'tis bliss too exquisite
For human sense!—thus let me answer thee.
[*Embracing him again.*
Where are my other boys?

Pub. They only wait
Till Alba's loit'ring chiefs declare her champions,
Our future victims, sir, and with the news
Will greet their father's ear.

Horatius. It shall not need.
Myself will to the field. Come, let us haste,
My old blood boils, and my tumultuous spirits
Pant for the onset. Oh, for one short hour
Of vigorous youth, that I might share the toil
Now with my boys, and be the next my last!

Horatia. My brother!

Pub. My Horatia! ere the dews
Of evening fall, thou shalt with transport own me;
Shalt own thy country's saviour in thy arms,
Or bathe his honest bier with tears of joy.
Thy lover greets thee, and complains of absence
With many a sigh, and many a longing look
Sent tow'rd the towers of Rome.

Horatia. Methinks, a lover
Might take th' advantage of the truce, and bear
His kind complaints himself, not trust his vows
To other tongues, or be oblig'd to tell
The passing winds his passion.

Pub. Dearest sister,
He with impatience waits the lucky moment

That may with honour bear him to your arms.
Didst thou but hear how tenderly he talks,
How blames the dull delay of Alban councils,
And chides the ling'ring minutes as they pass,
Till fate determines, and the tedious chiefs
Permit his absence, thou wouldst pity him.
But soon, my sister, soon shall every bar
Which thwarts thy happiness be far away.
We are no longer enemies to Alba,
This day unites us, and to-morrow's sun
May hear thy vows, and make my friend, my brother.

Horatius. [*Having talked apart with* VALERIA.]
'Tis truly Roman!—Here's a maid, Horatia,
Laments her brother lost the glorious proof
Of dying for his country.—Come, my son,
Her softness will infect thee; pr'ythee, leave her.

Horatia. [*Looking first on her Father, and then tenderly on her Brother.*] Not till my soul has pour'd its wishes for him.
Hear me, dread god of war, protect and save him!
[*Kneeling.*
For thee, and thy immortal Rome, he fights!
Dash the proud spear from every hostile hand
That dares oppose him; may each Alban chief
Fly from his presence, or his vengeance feel!
And when in triumph he returns to Rome, [*Rising*
Hail him, ye maids, with grateful songs of praise,
And scatter all the blooming spring before him;
Curs'd be the envious brow that smiles not then,
Curs'd be the wretch that wears one mark of sorrow,
Or flies not thus with open arms to greet him.

Enter TULLUS HOSTILIUS, VALERIUS, *and* GUARDS.

Valerius. The king, my lord, approaches.

Horatius. Gracious sir,
Whence comes this condescension?

Tullus. Good old man,
Could I have found a nobler messenger,

I would have spar'd myself th' ungrateful task
Of this day's embassy, for much I fear
My news will want a welcome.
Horatius. Mighty king!
Forgive an old man's warmth——they have not sure
Made choice of other combatants!—My sons,
Must they not fight for Rome?
Tullus. Too sure they must.
Horatius. Then I am blest.
Tullus. But that they must engage
Will hurt thee most, when thou shalt know with whom.
Horatius. I care not whom.
Tullus. Suppose your nearest friends,
The Curiatii, were the Alban choice,
Could you bear that? Could you, young man, support
A conflict there?
Pub. I could perform my duty,
Great sir, though even a brother should oppose me.
Tullus. Thou art a Roman! Let thy king embrace thee.
Know then, that trial must be thine. The Albans
With envy saw one family produce
Three chiefs, to whom their country dared entrust
The Roman cause, and scorn'd to be undone.
Horatia. Then I am lost indeed! [*Swoons.*
Horatius. Oh, foolish girl, to shame thy father thus!
Here, bear her in.
[HORATIA *is carried in,* VALERIUS *and* VALERIA *follow.*
I am concern'd, my sovereign,
That even the meanest part of me should blast
With impious grief a cause of so much glory.
But let the virtues of my boy excuse it.
Tullus. It does most amply. She has cause for sorrow.

The shock was sudden, and might well alarm
A firmer bosom.
We leave her to her tears. For you, young soldier,
You must prepare for combat. Some few hours
Are all that are allow'd you. But I charge you
Try well your heart, and strengthen every thought
Of patriot in you. Think how dreadful 'tis
To plant a dagger in the breast you love;
To spurn the ties of nature, and forget
In one short hour whole years of virtuous friendship.
Think well on that.

Pub. I do, my gracious sovereign;
And think the more I dare subdue affection,
The more my glory.

Tullus. True; but yet consider,
Is it an easy task to change affections?
In the dread onset can your meeting eyes
Forget their usual intercourse, and wear
At once the frown of war, and stern defiance?
Will not each look recall the fond remembrance
Of childhood past, when the whole open soul
Breath'd cordial love, and plighted many a vow
Of tend'rest import! Think on that, young soldier,
And tell me if thy breast be still unmov'd?

Pub. Think not, oh, king, howe'er resolv'd on combat,
I sit so loosely to the bonds of nature,
As not to feel their force. I feel it strongly.
I love the Curiatii, and would serve them
At life's expense: but here a nobler cause
Demands my sword: for all connexions else,
All private duties are subordinate
To what we owe the public. Partial ties,
Of son and father, husband, friend or brother,
Owe their enjoyments to the public safety,
And without that were vain.—Nor need we, sir
Cast off humanity, and to be heroes

Cease to be men. As in our earliest days,
While yet we learn'd the exercise of war,
We strove together, not as enemies,
Yet conscious each of his peculiar worth,
And scorning each to yield; so will we now
Engage with ardent, not with hostile, minds,
Not fir'd with rage, but emulous of fame.

Tullus. Now I dare trust thee; go and teach thy brothers
To think like thee, and conquest is your own.
This is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He, who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown;
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him.—Come, Horatius,
Thy other sons shall meet thee at the camp;
For now I do bethink me, 'tis not fit
They should behold their sister thus alarm'd.
Haste, soldier, and detain them. [*To one of the* GUARDS.

Horatius. Gracious sir,
We'll follow on the instant.

Tullus. Then farewell.
When next we meet, 'tis Rome and liberty!
[*Exit with* GUARDS.

Horatius. Come, let me arm thee for the glorious toil.
I have a sword, whose lightning oft has blaz'd
Dreadfully fatal to my country's foes;
This shalt thou bear; myself will gird it on,
And lead thee forth to death or victory. [*Going.*
—And yet, my Publius, shall I own my weakness?
Tho' I detest the cause from whence they spring,
I feel thy sister's sorrows like a father.
She was my soul's delight.

Pub. And may remain so.
This sudden shock has but alarm'd her virtue,
Not quite subdu'd its force. At least, my father,

Time's lenient hand will teach her to endure
The ills of chance, and reason conquer love.
Horatius. Should we not see her?
Pub. By no means, my lord;
You heard the king's commands about my brothers,
And we have hearts as tender sure as they.
Might I advise, you should confine her closely,
Lest she infect the matrons with her grief,
And bring a stain we should not wish to fix
On the Horatian name.
Horatius. It shall be so.
We'll think no more of her. 'Tis glory calls,
And humbler passions beat alarms in vain. [*Exit.*

As HORATIUS *goes off,* HORATIA *enters at another Door.*

Horatia. Where is my brother?—Oh, my dearest Publius,
If e'er you lov'd Horatia, ever felt
That tenderness which you have seem'd to feel,
Oh, hear her now!
Pub. What wouldst thou, my Horatia?
Horatia. I know not what I would—I'm on the rack,
Despair and madness tear my lab'ring soul.
—And yet, my brother, sure you might relieve me.
Pub. How? by what means? By Heaven, I'll die to do it.
Horatia. You might decline the combat.
Pub. Ha!
Horatia. I do not
Expect it from thee. Pr'ythee look more kindly.
—And yet, is the request so very hard?
I only ask thee not to plunge thy sword
Into the breast thou lov'st, not kill thy friend;
Is that so hard?—I might have said thy brother.
Pub. What canst thou mean? Beware, beware, Horatia;
Thou know'st I dearly love thee, nay, thou know'st
I love the man with whom I must engage,

Yet hast thou faintly read thy brother's soul,
If thou canst think entreaties have the power,
Tho' urg'd with all the tenderness of tears,
To shake his settled purpose: they may make
My task more hard, and my soul bleed within me,
But cannot touch my virtue.

Horatia. 'Tis not virtue
Which contradicts our nature, 'tis the rage
Of over-weening pride. Has Rome no champions
She could oppose but you? Are there not thousands
As warm for glory, and as tried in arms,
Who might without a crime aspire to conquest,
Or die with honest fame?

Pub. Away, away!
Talk to thy lover thus. But 'tis not Caius
Thou wouldst have infamous.

Horatia. Oh, kill me not
With such unkind reproaches. Yes, I own
I love him, more———

Pub. Than a chaste Roman maid
Should dare confess.

Horatia. Should dare! What means my brother?
I had my father's sanction on my love,
And duty taught me first to feel its power.
—Should dare confess!—Is that the dreadful crime!
Alas, but spare him, spare thy friend, Horatius,
And I will cast him from my breast for ever.
Will that oblige thee?

Pub. Why wilt thou talk thus madly? Love him still!
And if we fall the victims of our country,
(Which Heav'n avert!) wed, and enjoy him freely.

Horatia. Oh, never, never. What, my country's bane!
The murd'rer of my brothers! may the gods
First pour out each unheard-of vengeance on me!

Pub. Do not torment thyself thus idly—Go,
Compose thyself, and be again my sister.

Enter HORATIUS, *with the Sword.*

Horatius. This sword in Veii's field——What
thou here?
Leave him, I charge thee, girl——Come, come,
Publius,
Let's haste where duty calls.
Horatia. What! to the field?
He must not, shall not go;
Oh, if you have not quite cast off affection!
If you detest not your distracted sister——
Horatius. Shame of thy race, why dost thou h
upon him?
Wouldst thou entail eternal infamy
On him, on me, and all?
Horatia. Indeed I would not,
I know I ask impossibilities;
Yet pity me, my father!
Pub. Pity thee!
Begone, fond wretch, nor urge my temper thus.
By Heaven, I love thee as a brother ought.
Then hear my last resolve; if Fate, averse
To Rome and us, determine my destruction,
I charge thee wed thy lover; he will then
Deserve thee nobly. Or, if kinder gods
Propitious hear the prayers of suppliant Rome,
And he should fall by me, I then expect
No weak upbraidings for a lover's death,
But such returns as shall become thy birth,
A sister's thanks for having sav'd her country. [E
Horatia. Yet stay—Yet hear me, Publius—
Horatius. Forbear, rash girl, thou'lt tempt thy
ther
To do an outrage might perhaps distract him.
Horatia. Alas, forgive me, sir, I'm very wretche
Indeed I am—Yet I will strive to stop
This swelling grief, and bear it like your daughter.
Do but forgive me, sir.
Horatius. I do, I do——

Go in, my child, the gods may find a way
To make thee happy yet. But on thy duty,
Whate'er reports may reach, or fears alarm thee,
I charge thee come not to the field.
Horatia. I will not,
If you command it, sir. But will you then,
As far as cruel honour may permit,
Remember that your poor Horatia's life
Hangs on this dreadful contest! [*Exit* HORATIA.
Horatius. [*Looking after her.*] Spite of my boasted strength, her grief unmans me.
—But let her from my thoughts! The patriot's breast

No hopes, no fears, but for his country knows,
And in her danger loses private woes. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Continues.

VALERIUS *and* VALERIA *meeting.*

Valerius. Now, my Valeria, where's the charming she
That calls me to her? with a lover's haste
I fly to execute the dear command.
Valeria. 'Tis not the lover, but the friend she wants,
If thou dar'st own that name.
Valerius. The friend, my sister!
There's more than friendship in a lover's breast,
More warm, more tender is the flame he feels—
Valeria. Alas! these raptures suit not her distress:
She seeks th' indulgent friend, whose sober sense,
Free from the mists of passion, might direct
Her jarring thoughts, and plead her doubtful cause.

Valerius. Am I that friend? Oh, did she turn her thought
On me for that kind office?
Valeria. Yes, Valerius.
She chose you out to be her advocate
To Curiatius; 'tis the only hope
She now dares cherish; her relentless brother
With scorn rejects her tears, her father flies her,
And only you remain to sooth her cares,
And save her ere she sinks.
Valerius. Her advocate
To Curiatius!
Valeria. 'Tis to him she sends you,
To urge her suit, and win him from the field.
But come, her sorrows will more strongly plead
Than all my grief can utter.
Valerius. To my rival!
To Curiatius plead her cause, and teach
My tongue a lesson which my heart abhors!
Impossible! Valeria, pr'ythee say
Thou saw'st me not; the business of the camp
Confin'd me there. Farewell. [*Going.*
Valeria. What means my brother?
You cannot leave her now; for shame, turn back
Is this the virtue of a Roman youth?
Oh, by these tears!——
Valerius. They flow in vain, Valeria:
Nay, and thou know'st they do. Oh, earth and heav'n!
This combat was the means my happier stars
Found out to save me from the brink of ruin;
And can I plead against it, turn assassin
On my own life?
Valeria. Yet thou canst murder her
Thou dost pretend to love; away, deceiver!
I'll seek some worthier messenger to plead
In beauty's cause; but first inform Horatia,
How much Valerius is the friend she thought him.
[*Going.*

Valerius. Oh, heavens! stay, sister; 'tis an arduous task.

Valeria. I know the task is hard, and thought I knew
Thy virtue too.

Valerius. I must, I will obey thee.
Lead on,—Yet pr'ythee, for a moment leave me,
Till I can recollect my scatter'd thoughts,
And dare to be unhappy.

Valeria. My Valerius!
I fly to tell her you but wait her pleasure. [*Exit.*

Valerius. Yes, I will undertake this hateful office;
It never can succeed.—Yet at this instant
It may be dang'rous, while the people melt
With fond compassion.—No, it cannot be;
His resolution's fix'd, and virtuous pride
Forbids an alteration. To attempt it
Makes her my friend, and may afford hereafter
A thousand tender hours to move my suit.
That hope determines all. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA. HORATIA *with a Scarf in her Hand.*

Horatia. Where is thy brother? Wherefore stays he thus?
Did you conjure him? did he say he'd come?
I have no brothers now, and fly to him
As my last refuge. Did he seem averse
To thy entreaties? Are all brothers so?

Valeria. Dear maid,

Restrain your sorrows; I've already told you
My brother will with transport execute
Whatever you command.
Horatia. Oh! wherefore then
Is he away? Each moment now is precious;
If lost, 'tis lost for ever, and if gain'd,
Long scenes of lasting peace, and smiling years
Of happiness unhop'd for wait upon it.
Valeria. I will again go seek him; pray, be calm;
Success is thine if it depends on him. [*Exit.*
Horatia. Success! alas, perhaps even now too late
I labour to preserve him; the dread arm
Of vengeance is already stretch'd against him,
And he must fall. Yet let me strive to save him.
Yes, thou dear pledge, design'd for happier hours,
[*To the Scarf.*
The gift of nuptial love, thou shalt at least
Essay thy power.
Oft as I fram'd thy web,
He sate beside me, and would say in sport,
This present, which thy love designs for me,
Shall be the future bond of peace betwixt us:
By this we'll swear a lasting love; by this,
Through the sweet round of all our days to come,
Ask what thou wilt, and Curiatius grants it.
O I shall try thee nearly now, dear youth;
Glory and I are rivals for thy heart,
And one must conquer.

Enter VALERIUS *and* VALERIA.

Valerius. 'Save you, gracious lady!
On the first message which my sister sent me
I had been here, but was oblig'd by office,
Ere to their champions each resign'd her charge,
To ratify the league 'twixt Rome and Alba.
Horatia. Are they engag'd then?
Valerius. No, not yet engag'd;
Soft pity for a while suspend the onset;

The sight of near relations, arm'd in fight
Against each other, touch'd the gazers' hearts;
And senators on each side have propos'd
To change the combatants.
Horatia. My blessings on them!
Think you they will succeed?
Valerius. The chiefs themselves
Are resolute to fight.
Horatia. Insatiate virtue!
I must not to the field; I am confin'd
A prisoner here: or sure these tears would move
Their flinty breasts.—O, sir, forgive a maid,
Who dares in spite of modesty confess
Too soft a passion. Will you pardon me,
If I entreat you to the field again,
An humble suitor from the veriest wretch
That ever knew distress.
Valerius. Dear lady, speak!
What would you I should do?
Horatia. O bear this to him.
Valerius. To whom?
Horatia. To Curiatius bear this scarf:
And tell him, if he ever truly lov'd;
If all the vows he breath'd were not false lures
To catch th'unwary mind—and sure they were not!
Oh, tell him how he may with honour cease
To urge his cruel right; the senators
Of Rome and Alba will approve such mildness.
Tell him his wife, if he will own that name,
Entreats him from the field; his lost Horatia
Begs on her trembling knees he would not tempt
A certain fate, and murder her he loves.
Tell him, if he consents, she fondly swears,
By every god the varying world adores,
By this dear pledge of vow'd affection, swears,
To know no brother and no sire but him;
With him, if honour's harsh commands require it,
She'll wander forth, and seek some distant home,
Nor ever think of Rome or Alba more.

Valerius. Could I, sweet lady,
But paint your grief with half the force I feel it,
I need but tell it him, and he must yield.
Horatia. It may be so. Stay, stay; be sure you tell him,
If he rejects my suit, no power on earth
Shall force me to his arms. I will devise——
I'll die and be reveng'd!
Valeria. Away, my brother!
But, oh, for pity, do your office justly!
[*Aside to* VALERIUS.
Let not your passion blind your reason now;
But urge your cause with ardour.
Valerius. By my soul,
I will, Valeria. Her distress alarms me;
And I have now no interest but her's. [*Exit.*
Horatia. He's gone—I had a thousand things—
And yet I'm glad he's gone. Think you, Valeria,
Your brother will delay?—They may engage
Before he reaches them.
Valeria. The field's so near,
That a few minutes brings him to the place.
My dear Horatia, success is yours already.
Horatia. And yet, should I succeed, the hard gain'd strife
May chance to rob me of my future peace.
He may not always with the eyes of love
Look on that fondness which has stabb'd his fame.
He may regret too late the sacrifice
He made to love, and a fond woman's weakness;
And think the milder joys of social life
But ill repay him for the mighty loss
Of patriot reputation!
Valeria. Pray, forbear;
And search not thus into eventful time
For ills to come.
He will admire thy love, which could persuade him
To give up glory, for the milder triumph,
Of heartfelt ease, and soft humanity.

Horatia. I fain would hope so. Yet we hear not of him.
Your brother, much I fear, has su'd in vain.
Could we not send to urge this slow express?—
This dread uncertainty! I long to know
My life or death at once.
Valeria. Shall I to the walls?
I may from thence with ease survey the field,
And can despatch a messenger each moment,
To tell thee all goes well.
Horatia. My best Valeria!
Fly then;
Thou art a Roman maid; and though thy friendship
Detains thee here with one who scarce deserves
That sacred name, art anxious for thy country.
But yet for charity think kindly of me;
For thou shalt find by the event, Valeria,
I am a Roman too, however wretched.
[*Exit* VALERIA.
Am I a Roman then? Ye powers! I dare not
Resolve the fatal question I propose.
If dying would suffice, I were a Roman:
But to stand up against this storm of passions,
Transcends a woman's weakness. Hark! what noise?
'Tis news from Curiatius!—Love, I thank thee!

Enter a SERVANT.

Well, does he yield? Distract me not with silence.
Say, in one word——
Serv. Your father——
Horatia. What of him?
Would he not let him yield? Oh, cruel father!
Serv. Madam, he's here——
Horatia. Who?
Serv. Borne by his attendants.
Horatia. What mean'st thou?

Enter HORATIUS, *led in by his* SERVANTS.

Horatius. Lead me yet a little onward;
I shall recover straight.
Horatia. My gracious sire!
Horatius. Lend me thy arm, Horatia—So—My child,
Be not surpris'd; an old man must expect
These little shocks of nature; they are hints
To warn us of our end.
Horatia. How are you, sir?
Horatius. Better, much better. My frail body could not
Support the swelling tumult of my soul.
Horatia. No accident, I hope, alarm'd you, sir!
My brothers——
Horatius. Here, go to the field again,
You, Cautus and Vindicius, and observe
Each circumstance. I shall be glad to hear
The manner of the fight.
Horatia. Are they engag'd?
Horatius. They are, Horatia. But first let me thank thee
For staying from the field. I would have seen
The fight myself; but this unlucky illness
Has forc'd me to retire. Where is thy friend?

Enter a SERVANT, *who gives a Paper to* HORATIA, *and retires.*

What paper's that? Why dost thou tremble so?
Here, let me open it. [*Takes the Paper, and opens it.*]
From Curiatius!
Horatia. Oh, keep me not in this suspense, my father!
Relieve me from the rack.
Horatius. He tells thee here,
He dares not do an action that would make him
Unworthy of thy love; and therefore—

Horatia. Dies!——
Well—I am satisfied.
Horatius. I see by this
Thou hast endeavour'd to persuade thy lover
To quit the combat. Couldst thou think, Horatia,
He'd sacrifice his country to a woman?
Horatia. I know not what I thought. He proves too plainly,
Whate'er it was, I was deceiv'd in him
Whom I applied to.
Horatius. Do not think so, daughter;
Could he with honour have declin'd the fight,
I should myself have join'd in thy request,
And forc'd him from the field. But think, my child,
Had he consented, and had Alba's cause,
Supported by another arm, been baffled,
What then couldst thou expect? Would he not curse
His foolish love, and hate thee for thy fondness?
Nay, think, perhaps, 'twas artifice in thee
To aggrandize thy race, and lift their fame
Triumphant o'er his ruin and his country's.
Think well on that, and reason must convince thee.
Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Alas! had reason ever yet the power
To talk down grief, or bid the tortur'd wretch
Not feel his anguish? 'Tis impossible.
Could reason govern, I should now rejoice
They were engag'd, and count the tedious moments
Till conquest smil'd, and Rome again was free.
Could reason govern, I should beg of Heaven
To guide my brother's sword, and plunge it deep
Ev'n in the bosom of the man I love;
I should forget he ever won my soul,
Forget 'twas your command that bade me love him,
Nay, fly perhaps to yon detested field,
And spurn with scorn his mangled body from me.
Horatius. Why wilt thou talk thus? Pry'thee, be more calm.

I can forgive thy tears; they flow from nature;
And could have gladly wish'd the Alban state
Had found us other enemies to vanquish.
But Heaven has will'd it, and Heaven's will be done!
The glorious expectation of success
Buoys up my soul, nor lets a thought intrude
To dash my promis'd joys! What steady valour
Beams from their eyes! just so, if fancy's power
May form conjecture from his after-age,
Rome's founder must have look'd, when, warm in youth
And flush'd with future conquest, forth he march'd
Against proud Acron, with whose bleeding spoils
He grac'd the altar of Feretrian Jove——
Methinks I feel recover'd: I might venture
Forth to the field again. What ho! Volscinius!
Attend me to the camp.

Horatia. My dearest father,
Let me entreat you stay; the tumult there
Will discompose you, and a quick relapse
May prove most dangerous. I'll restrain my tears,
If they offend you.

Horatius. Well, I'll be advis'd.
'Twere now too late; ere this they must have conquer'd,
And here's the happy messenger of glory.

Enter VALERIA.

Valeria. All's lost, all's ruin'd! freedom is no more!

Horatius. What dost thou say?

Valeria. That Rome's subdu'd by Alba.

Horatius. It cannot be. Where are my sons? All dead?

Valeria. Publius is still alive—the other two
Have paid the fatal debt they ow'd their country.

Horatius. Publius alive! You must mistake, Valeria.
He knows his duty better.
He must be dead, or Rome victorious.

Valeria. Thousands as well as I beheld the combat.

After his brother's death he stood alone,
And acted wonders against three assailants;
Till forc'd at last to save himself by flight——
Horatius. By flight! And did the soldiers let him pass?
Oh, I am ill again!—The coward villain!
[*Throwing himself into his Chair.*
Horatia. Alas, my brothers!
Horatius. Weep not for them, girl.
They've died a death which kings themselves might envy;
And whilst they liv'd they saw their country free.
Oh, had I perish'd with them!——But for him,
Whose impious flight dishonours all his race,
Tears a fond father's heart, and tamely barters
For poor precarious life his country's glory,
Weep, weep for him, and let me join my tears!
Valeria. What could he do, my lord, when three oppos'd him?
Horatia. Die!
Oh, villain, villain, villain!
And he shall die; this arm shall sacrifice
The life he dar'd preserve with infamy.
[*Endeavouring to rise.*
What means this weakness? 'Tis untimely now,
When I should punish an ungrateful boy.
Was this his boasted virtue, which could charm
His cheated sovereign, and brought tears of joy
To my old eyes?—So young a hypocrite!
Oh, shame, shame, shame!
Valeria. Have patience, sir; all Rome
Beheld his valour, and approv'd his flight,
Against such opposition.
Horatius. Tell not me!
What's Rome to me? Rome may excuse her traitor;
But I'm the guardian of my house's honour,
And I will punish. Pray ye, lead me forth;

I would have air. But grant me strength, kind g
To do this act of justice, and I'll own,

Whate'er 'gainst Rome your awful wills decree.
You still are just and merciful to me. [*Ex*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Room in HORATIUS's *House.*

Enter HORATIUS, VALERIA *following.*

Horatius. Away, away!—I feel my strength new'd,
And I will hunt the villain thro' the world;
No deserts shall conceal, nor darkness hide him.
He is well skill'd in flight; but he shall find
'Tis not so easy to elude the vengeance
Of a wrong'd father's arm, as to escape
His adversary's sword.

Valeria. Restrain your rage
But for a moment, sir. When you shall hear
The whole unravell'd, you will find he's innocent.

Horatius. It cannot be.

Valeria. And see, my brother comes!
He may perhaps relate——

Horatius. I will not hear him;
I will not listen to my shame again.

Enter VALERIUS.

Valerius. I come with kind condolence from the king,
To sooth a father's grief, and to express——
Horatius. I've heard it all; I pray you spare my blushes.
I want not consolation; 'tis enough
They've perish'd for their country. But the third—
Valerius. True, he indeed may well supply your loss,
And calls for all your fondness.
Horatius. All my vengeance:
And he shall have it, sir.
Valerius. Vengeance!
My lord! What fault has he committed?
Horatius. Why will you double my confusion thus?
Is flight no fault?
Valerius. In such a cause as his
'Twas glorious.
Horatius. Glorious! Oh, rare sophistry!
To find a way through infamy to glory!
Valerius. I scarce can trust my senses—Infamy!
What, was it infamous to save his country?
Is art a crime? Is it the name of flight
We can't forgive, though its ador'd effect
Restor'd us all to freedom, fame, and empire?
Horatius. What fame, what freedom? Who has sav'd his country?
Valerius. Your son, my lord, has done it.
Horatius. How, when, where?
Valerius. Is't possible! Did not you say you knew
Horatius. I care not what I knew—Oh, tell me all
Is Rome still free?—Has Alba?—Has my son?——!
Tell me——
Valerius. Your son, my lord, has slain her champions.
Horatius. What, Publius?

Valerius. Ay, Publius.
Horatius. Were there not three remaining?
Valerius. True, there were;
But wounded all.
Horatius. Your sister here had told us:
That Rome was vanquish'd, that my son was fled——
Valerius. And he did fly; but 'twas that flight preserv'd us.
All Rome as well as she has been deceiv'd.
Horatius. Come, relate it.
Did I not say, Valeria, that my boy
Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?
I long to hear the manner—Well, Valerius——
Valerius. Your other sons, my lord, had paid the debt
They ow'd to Rome, and he alone remain'd
'Gainst three opponents, whose united strength,
Tho' wounded each, and robb'd of half their force,
Was still too great for his. A while he stood
Their fierce assaults, and then pretended flight
Only to tire his wounded adversaries.
Horatius. Pretended flight, and this succeeded, ha!
Oh, glorious boy!
Valerius. 'Twas better still, my lord;
For all pursued, but not with equal speed.
Each, eager for the conquest, press'd to reach him;
Nor did the first, till 'twas too late, perceive
His fainter brothers panting far behind.
Horatius. He took them singly then? An easy conquest;
'Twas boy's play only.
Valerius. Never did I see
Such universal joy, as when the last
Sunk on the ground beneath Horatius' sword;
Who seem'd a while to parley as a friend,
And would have given him life, but Caius scorn'd it.
Valeria. Caius! Oh, poor Horatia!
Horatius. Peace, I charge thee.

Go, dress thy face in smiles, and bid thy friend
Wake to new transports. Let ambition fire her.
What is a lover lost? There's not a youth
In Rome but will adore her. Kings will seek
For her alliance now, and mightiest chiefs
Be honour'd by her smiles. Will they not youth?
[*Exit* VALERIA.

Valerius. Most sure, my lord, this day has added worth
To her whose merit was before unequall'd.

Horatius. How could I doubt his virtue!—
Gracious Heaven!
Where is he? Let me fly, and at his feet
Forget the father, and implore a pardon
For such injustice.

Valerius. The king, ere this,
Has from the field despatch'd him;
But hark! that shout
Which sounds from far, and seems the mingled voice
Of thousands, speaks him onward on his way.

Horatius. How my heart dances!—Yet I blush to meet him.
But I will on. Come, come, Horatia; leave
[*Calling at the Door.*
Thy sorrow far behind, and let us fly
With open arms to greet our common glory. [*Exit.*

Enter HORATIA *and* VALERIA.

Horatia. Yes, I will go; this father's hard command
Shall be obey'd; and I will meet the conqueror,
But not in smiles.

Valerius. Oh, go not, gentle lady!
Might I advise——

Valeria. Your griefs are yet too fresh,
And may offend him. Do not, my Horatia.

Valerius. Indeed 'twere better to avoid his presence;
It will revive your sorrows, and recall——

Horatia. Sir, when I saw you last, I was a woman,
The fool of nature, a fond prey to grief,
Made up of sighs and tears. But now my soul
Disdains the very thought of what I was;
'Tis grown too callous to be mov'd with toys.
Observe me well; am I not nobly chang'd?
Stream my sad eyes, or heaves my breast one groan?
No: for I doubt no longer. 'Tis not grief,
'Tis resolution now, and fix'd despair.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, you strike terrors thro' me;
What dreadful purpose hast thou form'd? Oh, speak!

Valerius. Hear me yet, sweet lady.
You must not go; whatever you resolve,
There is a sight, will pierce you to the soul.

Horatia. What sight?

Valerius. Alas! I should be glad to hide it;
But it is——
Your brother wears in triumph
The very scarf I bore to Curiatius.

Horatia. [*Wildly.*] Ye gods, I thank ye! 'tis with joy I hear it.
If I should falter now, that sight would rouse
My drooping rage, and swell the tempest louder.
——But soft; they may prevent me; my wild pass'on
Betrays my purpose,——I'll dissemble with them.
[*She sits down.*

Valerius. She softens now.

Valeria. How do you, my Horatia?

Horatia. Alas, my friend, 'tis madness which I utter——
Since you persuade me then, I will not go.
But leave me to myself; I would sit here;
Alone in silent sadness pour my tears,
And meditate on my unheard of woes.

Valerius. [*To* VALERIA.] 'Twere well to humour this. But may she not,
If left alone, do outrage on herself.

Valeria. I have prevented that; she has not near her
One instrument of death.

Valerius. Retire we then.

[*Exeunt* VALERIUS *and* VALERIA.—*After a short silence,* HORATIA *rises and comes forward.*

Horatia. Yes, they are gone; and now be firm, my soul!
This way I can elude their search. The heart,
Which dotes like mine, must break to be at ease.
Just now I thought, had Curiatius liv'd,
I could have driven him from my breast for ever.
But death has cancell'd all my wrongs at once.
——They were not wrongs; 'twas virtue which undid us,
And virtue shall unite us in the grave.
I heard them say, as they departed hence,
That they had robb'd me of all means of death.
Vain thought! they know not half Horatia's purpose.
Be resolute, my brother; let not weak
Unmanly fondness mingle with thy virtue,
And I will touch thee nearly. Oh, come on,
'Tis thou alone canst give Horatia peace. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Street in Rome.

Chorus of YOUTHS *and* VIRGINS *singing and scattering Branches of Oak, Flowers, &c.*

Enter HORATIUS, *leaning on the Arm of* PUBLIUS HORATIUS.

CHORUS.

Thus, for freedom nobly won,
Rome her hasty tribute pours;
And on one victorious son
Half exhausts her blooming stores.

A YOUTH.

Scatter here the laurel crown,
Emblem of immortal praise!
Wondrous youth! to thy renown
Future times shall altars raise.

A VIRGIN.

Scatter here the myrtle wreath,
Though the bloodless victor's due;
Grateful thousands sav'd from death
Shall devote that wreath to you.

A YOUTH.

Scatter here the oaken bough;
Ev'n for one averted fate,
We that civic meed bestow——
He sav'd all who sav'd the state.

CHORUS.

Thus for freedom, &c.

Horatius. My dearest boy,
I cannot tell thee half my ecstacy.
The day which gave thee first to my glad hopes
Was misery to this——I'm mad with transport!
Why are ye silent there? Again renew
Your songs of praise, and, in a louder strain,
Pour forth your joy, and tell the list'ning spheres
That Rome is freed by my Horatius' hand.
Pub. No more, my friends.——You must permit me, sir,
To contradict you here. Not but my soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise:
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him who hears it can with honest pride
Confess it just, and listen to its music.
But now the toils I have sustain'd require
Their interval of rest, and every sense
Is deaf to pleasure—Let me leave you, friends;
We're near our home, and would be private now:
To-morrow we'll expect your kind attendance
To share our joys, and waft our thanks to Heaven.

As they are going off, HORATIA *rushes in.*

Horatia. Where is this mighty chief?
Horatius. My daughter's voice!
I bade her come; she has forgot her sorrows,
And is again my child.

Horatia. Is this the hero,
That tramples nature's ties, and nobly soars
Above the dictates of humanity?
Let me observe him well.
Pub. What means my sister?
Horatia. Thy sister! I disclaim the impious title;
Base and inhuman! Give me back my husband,
My life, my soul, my murder'd Curiatius!
Pub. He perish'd for his country.
Horatia. Gracious gods
Was't not enough that thou hadst murder'd him,
But thou must triumph in thy guilt, and wear
His bleeding spoils?—Oh, let me tear them from thee,
Drink the dear drops that issu'd from his wounds,
More dear to me than the whole tide that swells,
With impious pride, a hostile brother's heart.
Horatius. Am I awake, or is it all illusion?
Was it for this thou cam'st?
Pub. Horatia, hear me,
Yet I am calm, and can forgive thy folly;
'Would I could call it by no harsher name.
But do not tempt me farther. Go, my sister.
Go hide thee from the world, nor let a Roman
Know with what insolence thou dar'st avow
Thy infamy, or what is more, my shame,
How tamely I forgave it.—Go, Horatia.
Horatia. I will not go.—What, have I touch'd thee, then?
And canst thou feel?—Oh, think not thou shalt lose
Thy share of anguish. I'll pursue thee still,
I'll be the fury, that shall haunt thy dreams;
Wake thee with shrieks, and place before thy sight
Thy mangled friends in all their pomp of horror.
Pub. Away with her! 'tis womanish complaining.
Think'st thou such trifles can alarm the man,
Whose noblest passion is his country's love?
Horatia. Curse on my country's love, the trick ye teach us

To make us slaves beneath the mask of virtue;
To rob us of each soft endearing sense,
And violate the first great law within us.
I scorn the impious passion.
Pub. Have a care;
Thou'st touch'd a string which may awake my vengeance.
Horatia. [*Aside.*] Then it shall do it.
Pub. Oh, if thou dar'st prophane
That sacred tie which winds about my heart,
By Heaven I swear, by the great gods, who rule
The fate of empires, 'tis not this fond weakness
Which hangs upon me, and retards my justice,
Nor even thy sex, which shall protect thee from me.
[*Clapping his Hand on his Sword.*
Horatius. Drag her away—thou'lt make me curse thee, girl——
Indeed she's mad. [*To* PUBLIUS.
Horatia. Stand off, I am not mad——
Nay, draw thy sword; I do defy thee, murderer,
Barbarian, Roman!——Mad! The name of Rome
Makes madmen of you all; my curses on it.
Rise, rise, ye states (Oh, that my voice could fire
Your tardy wrath!) confound its selfish greatness,
Rase its proud walls, and lay its towers in ashes!
Pub. I'll bear no more—— [*Drawing his Sword.*
Horatius. Distraction!—Force her off——
Horatia. [*Struggling.*] Could I but prove the Helen to destroy
This curs'd unsocial state, I'd die with transport:
Gaze on spreading fires—till the lost pile
Sunk in the blaze—then mingle with its ruins. [*Exit.*
Pub. Thou shalt not live to that. [*Exit after her.*
Thus perish all the enemies of Rome. [*Without.*

Enter VALERIUS.

Valerius. Oh, horror! horror! execrable act!

If there be law in Rome; if there be justice,
By Rome, and all its gods, thou shalt not 'scape. [*Exit.*

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. My whole soul's mov'd,
And Rome's immortal genius stirs within me.
Yes, ye dread powers, whose everlasting fires
Blaze on our altars, and whose sacred shields,
From Heav'n descending, guard imperial Rome,
I feel, I feel your wrongs; for you I bear the sword.

Enter HORATIA, *wounded.*

Horatia. Now thou'st indeed been kind, and I forgive you
The death of Curiatius; this last blow
Has cancell'd all, and thou'rt again my brother.
Horatius. Heavens! what a sight!
A daughter bleeding by a brother's hand!
My child! my child!
Horatia. What means this tenderness? I thought to see you
Inflam'd with rage against a worthless wretch,
Who has dishonour'd your illustrious race,
And stain'd its brightest fame: in pity look not
Thus kindly on me, for I have injur'd you.
Horatius. Thou hast not, girl;
said 'twas madness, but he would not hear me.
Horatia. Alas, my father!
All but my love was false; what that inspir'd
I utter'd freely.
But for the rest, the curses which I pour'd
On heaven-defended Rome, were merely lures
To tempt his rage, and perfect my destruction.
Heaven! with what transport I beheld him mov'd!
How my heart leap'd to meet the welcome point,
Stain'd with the life-blood of my Curiatius,
Cementing thus our union ev'n in death.

Pub. My sister, live! I charge thee live, Horatia!
Oh, thou hast planted daggers here!
Horatia. My brother!
Can you forgive me too! then I am happy.
I dar'd not hope for that! Ye gentle ghosts,
That rove Elysium, hear the sacred sound!
My father and my brother both forgive me!
I have again their sanction on my love.
Oh, let me hasten to those happier climes,
Where, unmolested, we may share our joys,
Nor Rome, nor Alba, shall disturb us more.

Enter VOLSCINIUS.

Vol. All Rome, my lord, has taken the alarm, and crowds
Of citizens enrag'd, are posting hither,
To call for justice on the head of Publius.
Horatius. Ungrateful men! how dare they? let them come.

Enter TULLUS, VALERIUS, *and* CITIZENS.

Valerius. See, fellow citizens, see where she lies,
The bleeding victim.
Tullus. Stop, unmanner'd youth!
Think'st thou we know not wherefore we are here?
Seest thou yon drooping sire?
Horatius. Permit them, sir.
Tullus. What would you, Romans?
Valerius. We are come, dread sir,
In the behalf of murder'd innocence;
Murder'd by him, the man——
Horatius. Whose conquering arm
Has sav'd you all from ruin. Oh, shame! shame!
Has Rome no gratitude? Do ye not blush
To think whom your insatiate rage pursues?
Down, down, and worship him.
1 *Citizen.* Does he plead for him?
Does he forgive his daughter's death?

Horatius. He does,
And glories in it, glories in the thought
That there's one Roman left who dares be grateful;
If you are wrong'd, then what am I? Must I
Be taught my duty by th' affected tears
Of strangers to my blood? Had I been wrong'd,
I know a father's right, and had not ask'd
This ready talking sir to bellow for me,
And mouth my wrongs in Rome.
Valerius. Friends, countrymen, regard not what he says;
Stop, stop your ears, nor hear a frantic father
Thus plead against his child.
Horatius. He does belie me.
What child have I? Alas! I have but one,
And him you would tear from me.
Citizen. Hear him! hear him!
Pub. No; let me speak. Think'st thou, ungrateful youth,
To hurt my quiet? I am hurt beyond
Thy power to harm me. Death's extremest tortures
Were happiness to what I feel. Yet know,
My injur'd honour bids me live; nay, more,
It bids me even descend to plead for life.
But wherefore waste I words? 'Tis not to him,
But you, my countrymen, to you, I speak;
He lov'd the maid.
1 *Citizen.* How! lov'd her!
Pub. Fondly lov'd her;
And, under show of public justice, screens
A private passion, and a mean revenge.
Think you I lov'd her not? High Heav'n's my witness
How tenderly I lov'd her; and the pangs
I feel this moment, could you see my heart,
'Twould prove too plainly I am still her brother.
1 *Citizen.* He shall be sav'd.
Valerius has misled us.

Save him! save him!

Tullus. If yet a doubt remains,
Behold that virtuous father, who could boast,
This very morn, a numerous progeny,
The dear supports of his declining age;
Then read the sad reverse with pitying eyes,
And tell your conscious hearts they fell for you.

Horatius. I am o'erpaid by that, nor claim I aught
On their accounts; by high Heaven, I swear,
I'd rather see him added to the heap,
Than Rome enslav'd.

1 *Citizen.* Oh, excellent Horatius!
Save him! save him!

Tullus. Then I pronounce him free. And now, Horatius,
The evening of thy stormy day at last
Shall close in peace. Here, take him to thy breast.

Horatius. My son, my conqueror! 'twas a fatal stroke,
But shall not wound our peace. This kind embrace
Shall spread a sweet oblivion o'er our sorrows;
Or, if in after times, though 'tis not long
That I shall trouble you, some sad remembrance,
Should steal a sigh, and peevish age forget
Its resolution, only boldly say
Thou sav'dst the state, and I'll intreat forgiveness.
Learn hence, ye Romans, on how sure a base
The patriot builds his happiness. No stroke,
No keenest, deadliest, shaft of adverse fate,
Can make his generous bosom quite despair,
But that alone by which his country falls.

Grief may to grief in endless round succeed,
And nature suffer when our children bleed;
But still superior must that hero prove,
Whose first, best passion, is his country's love.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO

EDWARD

THE BLACK PRINCE;

OR, THE

BATTLE OF POICTIERS;

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY WILLIAM SHIRLEY, ESQ.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

William Shirley, Esq. the author of this play, is little known but as a man well versed in commercial affairs. He was some time English resident at Lisbon, and was considered of deep penetration and knowledge in respect to the trading concerns of different nations; particularly in those of Great Britain and Portugal.

His name, as a poet, has not attained the same reputation as his skill in commerce; for, though he has produced many dramas, Edward the Black Prince is the only one, which has been acted of many years; nor does this tragedy possess much dramatic merit beyond the interest of the story.

The hero of Cressy and Poictiers must ever command the fixed attention of an English audience; and the reader of this play may not be displeased at having his memory revived on the subject of this great prince, by a short extract from history previous to its perusal.

" Edward, Prince of Wales, commonly called the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour, was the son of Edward III. and born in 1330. He accompanied his father to France when he was but sixteen years old, and distinguished himself there above all the warriors of his age, particularly at the battle *of Cressy*, where he took the standard of the King of

Bohemia, embroidered with three ostrich feathers, and having this motto, Ich Dien—*I serve*. This he always wore; and it has continued to be the crest of the Princes of Wales ever since."

The battle of Poictiers, in which greater feats were achieved than at Cressy, is very faithfully described in the following play, or, at least, all those events in which the Black Prince was himself concerned in his military capacity.

The character of Arnold, his love, and its ignominious effects, are the invention of the author to give variety to his production. But the coincidence of names between this British renegade and an American General who betrayed his post, and came over to the English army during the late war in America, confers some tokens of the prophetic upon the writer's pen.

This tragedy made its first appearance at Drury Lane in the year 1750; and as its reception was by no means flattering to the author, or advantageous to the manager, it sunk into obscurity, till Mr. Kemble chose Prince Edward for the second part in which to appear before a London audience. This was in the year 1783, and at that time, General Arnold, not long arrived from his hostile country, resided in this metropolis, a pensioner on the English government for betraying his own.

It was said, that the General, unacquainted with the fictitious events in this play, was unfortunately in the theatre on the first night of its revival. Whether this was a truth or not, it is certain, that in the scenes between Arnold and Ribemont, in the beginning of the

third act—and in that between Arnold and Edward in the fourth, a singular whisper ran through the whole audience, which denoted, that if they did not see the real Arnold, at least they thought of him.

The character of Audley has history for its foundation, and seems to be a precise recorder of facts.

" James, Lord Audley, of Haleigh in Staffordshire, distinguished himself greatly under Edward III. in France, and was one of the first Knights of the Garter. He was present at the famous battle of Poictiers, where he was so grievously wounded, that his esquires were obliged to bear him out of the field of battle; after which, the Black Prince bestowed on him a noble pension, with many marks of his regard."

BIOG. BRIT.

Ribemont appears to have been a creature of the poet's fancy, which should likewise have been exercised in giving birth to a female of much more importance than Mariana; for without a very interesting woman's part, few plays will be attractive.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EDWARD, PRINCE of WALES	*Mr. Kemble.*
EARL OF WARWICK	*Mr. Barrymore.*
EARL OF SALISBURY	*Mr. Fawcet.*
LORD AUDLEY	*Mr. Farren.*
LORD CHANDOS	*Mr. Williames.*
ARNOLD	*Mr. Brereton.*
CARDINAL PERIGORT	*Mr. Aickin.*
JOHN, THE FRENCH KING	*Mr. Staunton.*
DAUPHIN	*Mr. Phillimore.*
DUKE OF TOURAIN	
DUKE OF ATHENS	*Mr. R. Palmer.*
ARCHBISHOP OF SENS	*Mr. Chaplin.*
LORD RIBEMONT	*Mr. Palmer.*
LORD CHARNEY	*Mr. Packer.*
MARIANA	*Miss E. Kemble.*
LOUISA	

NOBLES, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

SCENE,—The English and French Camps, on and near the Plains of Poictiers in France.

EDWARD

THE BLACK PRINCE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The PRINCE OF WALES'S *Tent.*

PRINCE EDWARD *discovered, seated*—WARWICK, SALISBURY, AUDLEY, CHANDOS, *and Others, standing.*

Prince. My lords, I summon'd ye in haste to council;
Intelligence is brought me, that our foes
Have levied, to oppose us, such a strength
As almost staggers credibility!
What's to be done?—To tarry longer here,
And brave their fury in the heart of France,
Would be a rashness that may hazard all.
Consider therefore well, my fellow-warriors,
And aid my judgment with your good advice.
Speak, Warwick, your opinion.

War. Royal sir,
It is for marching back, with speed, to Bourdeaux.
Our little army, harrass'd with fatigue,
And heavy laden with the spoils of war,
Should, like the careful bees, ere storms o'ertake us,
Secure our treasures and prepare for rest.
The voice of wisdom urges our retreat,
Obey it, and be happy.
Aud. Shameful thought!
What, spirit dastards by inglorious flight?
No; never let it, mighty prince, be said,
That we, who, two succeeding summers, chac'd
From shore to shore of their extensive realm
Collected armies, doubling each our own!
Should here at length discover abject fear,
And skulk for coward safety. What are numbers?
Let all their kingdom's millions arm at once,
Such timid throngs, with multiplied dismay,
Would make confusion do the task of valour,
And work out their destruction.
Sal. Audley's thoughts
Accord with mine. While Salisbury has breath,
His tongue shall hurl defiance at their force.
Remember, princely Edward, Cressy's fields;
Remember every battle we have fought,
How much out-counted, yet how greatly victors!
Loud were the calls that broke our sleep of peace,
And bade us rouse and buckle on our arms;
A throne usurp'd, your royal father's right;
A violated truce, a vile attempt
To filch away the fruits of painful conquest,
By basely bribing servants from their duty.
Assaults so infamous, such rank dishonour,
At last awoke our monarch's high resentment:
O give it glorious scope! unhinge, destroy
Their very power of doing future wrongs:
So shall the rescued world pour forth its blessings,
And kings and kingdoms thank our arm for safety.

Chand. If Chandos give his voice for our retreat,
'Tis not from coward motives: All can witness
I have met danger with as firm a spirit
As any in our host.
Consider, gracious prince, and you, my lords,
What difficulties clog a winter's march.
Now homely let us look; and wisely there
Recruit, in time, our vigour and our numbers:
Thence, with the cheerful spring to issue forth,
Again to labour in the field of fame.

Prince. True wisdom, Chandos, dictates to your tongue,
And modest, manly, eloquence adorns it.
My lords of Salisbury and Audley, you,
Who cherish truth and candour in your minds,
Must yield to arguments so clear and strong.
Believe me, friends and brothers of the war,
A momentary ruin may involve us:
Such mighty hosts are rais'd, and now in motion,
As well will task our utmost skill to 'scape.
Upon the plains of Poictiers are encamp'd,
Th' extensive plains that our retreat must skirt,
An army double ours.

Aud. And shall we pass;
Go tamely by; and give them cause for vaunting
That Englishmen avoided once a battle?
No; never let us merit such a stain;
But boldly seek them, dare their double numbers,
And drive them, if a combat they decline,
To skip and wanton at a safer distance.

Sal. Give us, my prince, the pleasure but to spring
This gaudy flight of prating popinjays,
And we'll retire contented.

Chand. There my voice
Shall join ye, lords; to force them from their home
At such a juncture, will be doubly glorious!
Or should they venture battle, their discomfit

Will render our retreat to Bourdeaux safe,
And end our labours with a noble triumph.
Prince. Then be it so; for Poictiers we'll prepare.
[*Rising.*
Give instant orders, good my lords, for marching:
To-morrow's sun shall see us face our foes.
Here break we off; go each where duty calls.
[*Exeunt* LORDS.
Now for an office is most grateful to me.
Let Arnold know, that I expect him.
[A GENTLEMAN *appears, and retires again.*
How poor the pomps and trophies of the field,
The blaze of splendour, or that bubble, praise,
Compar'd with what the sympathizing heart
Feels from a gen'rous action!

Enter ARNOLD.

Welcome, Arnold.
I ne'er behold thy face, but pleasure springs
From the remembrance of those sprightly days,
Which led thro' early youth our happy friendship.
Arn. So honour'd, gracious prince, as I have been,
From humble fortune rais'd to envy'd greatness,
And still with ev'ry grace each gift made precious.
Oh, what are words in payment of such blessings!
What ev'n my life, were life itself laid down
In gratitude for such transcendent goodness!
Prince. If there's a transport tow'ring to divine;
If, in atonement for its load of cares,
One vast enjoyment is the gift of greatness,
'Tis that we can bestow where merit claims.
Thine is the vacant military post,
By Mountford's death reverted to my gift:
And keep thy office in my household still;
I must not lose the servant in the soldier.
Be henceforth both, and what is more, my friend.
Arn. How shall I praise——

Prince. Arnold, I merit none.
If thou hast kindness done thee, I have pleasure.
There is no joy a gen'rous mind can know,
Like that of giving virtue its reward:
Nor ought such payment be esteem'd a bounty;
For to deserve and give is equal favour.
But let me ask thee of thy beauteous charge:
How has the noble Mariana borne
Captive calamity?

Arn. With resignation
Worthy her birth and dignity of spirit:
Forgetting her misfortunes, all her talk
Turns on the topic of your kind protection.

Prince. Let it extend to all that can relieve
The mind from harsh reflections on her state.
We're now preparing for the fields of Poictiers:
Accommodate her on the wearying way
With thy best care. Remember I request it. [*Exit.*

Arn. Rely, my royal master, on my duty.
Needless injunction! Mariana's charms
Have giv'n her here such absolute command,
My very soul, my ev'ry pow'r, is her's.
But the cold maid, whene'er I plead my passion,
Chills me with sighs, and stifles all my flame
Of love with streaming tears. Benignant Heav'n!
Bless'd as I am with royal Edward's favour,
And Mariana's charms—and all beyond,
Let mad ambition grapple for, and gain. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The French Camp.

Enter CHARNEY *and the* ARCHBISHOP OF SENS.

Char. My Lord of Sens, I gladly give your grace
A joyful welcome to the plains of Poictiers.

You come the happy harbinger of comfort,
Returning to old Charney's woe-worn mind.
The king's approach revives my drooping spirits,
It feeds the dying lamp of life with hope,
That I shall live to riot in revenge.
Those English locusts, who devour our wealth,
Who spoil and slaughter with so wild a fury,
Grant, ye good pow'rs, these eyes may see destroy'd;
And I shall die contented!

Sens. Ev'ry tongue
Joins that petition. Your misfortunes, lord,
Most nearly touch the king.

Char. Oh, they are great!
The pride of ancient lineage treasur'd up,
Trophies of war and ornaments of pomp,
These won by valour, those with honour worn,
Favours of monarchs, and the gifts of Heav'n,
The relics of a glorious ancestry,
Are, with the mansion of my great forefathers,
A heap of ashes now!—A wide-spread ruin.
My age's blessing too, an only daughter,
Torn from her home to hard captivity,
The prey, the victim of a fell revenge!
Oh, matchless misery!——Oh, Mariana!

Sens. Your sorrows have been wept by ev'ry eye;
And all have wonder'd what should mark you out
For such peculiar vengeance.

Char. Nothing but
The service done our master, when I brib'd
Their governor to give up Calais to us;
Who, like a villain, broke his plighted faith,
And sacrific'd the gallant troops I led
To Edward's fury: slaughter'd all, or taken,
I was amongst the train, who grac'd his triumph!
There the proud King insulted me with taunts;
He call'd our undertaking vile and base;
With low'ring brow, and bitterness of speech,
Adding, he hop'd the fortune of his arms

Would give him to reward my treachery.
The father's wishes hath the son accomplish'd;
For which, may all the rage of ev'ry curse,
Flames, famines, pestilences, slaughters, join
To root from nature the detested race!

Sens. Grant it, good Heav'n!—But see, the Duke of Athens!

Enter ATHENS.

Char. Lord Constable, most welcome to my arms!

Ath. I thank you, noble Charney.

Char. Are the train
Of royal warriors, sir, arriv'd?

Ath. They are.

Char. Oh, joyful tidings! Sir, another hour
Shall speak at large my pleasure to behold you:
The present claims my duty to the King. [*Exit.*

Ath. My Lord of Sens, these secret marches made
From different parts by our divided host,
May steal us on our unprepared foes,
And give our arms, at length, an ample vengeance.

Sens. I greatly hope it. As I think, to-morrow,
Or I mistook the King, they'll all be here.

Ath. With early day, the instant we arriv'd,
A numerous party, led by Ribemont,
Came up and join'd us. Those the Dauphin brings,
Our last division, are to march by night;
We may expect them with to-morrow's dawn.

Sens. See! Ribemont is here!

Enter RIBEMONT.

Rib. Why, this looks well——
Here's bustle, expedition!—once again
We shine in arms, and wear a face of war.

Sens. O, may they never be again laid down,
Till England is repaid with all the plagues
Her sons have brought on France! My eager soul,
As does the fever'd lip for moisture, longs
To see destruction overwhelm that people.

Rib. Indulge no guilty hatred, rev'rend lord;
For fair report, and, let me add, experience,
Picture them lovely to impartial judgment.
The world allows they're valiant, gen'rous, wise;
Endow'd with all that dignifies our nature;
While, for their monarch—we'll appeal to facts,
And sure they speak him wonderful indeed!

Sens. It grates my soul to hear a Frenchman talk
Of greater glories than he finds at home.
Is not this monarch, you would make a god,
Our master's enemy, our country's foe?

Rib. A foe he is, but he's a noble foe!
I know his worth, and therefore will I speak it.
At our attack of Calais, 'twas my fortune
To meet in fight this Third King Edward's sword:
I found him all that heathens held their gods,
Artful and mighty! (pardon the proud vaunt)
Too much for me to conquer. Long we stood,
Buckler to buckler, clashing steel to steel,
Till, by superior soldiership o'ercome,
I yielded to a monarch. But so well,
With hardy vigour, I sustain'd the combat,
That freedom, ransomeless, was my reward.
The royal victor, when he bade me go,
Took from his brow the string of orient wealth;
Around my temples twin'd the glittering wreath,
And cry'd—Shine there, my token of applause.
Oh, if his valour wing'd amazement high,
Where was its flight, when his heroic soul,
Forgetting that my sword had aim'd his slaughter,
O'erlook'd all low regards, all partial ties,
And gave a vanquish'd enemy renown!

Sens. Detested boast!—Ambition's taint, my lord,
So warps, so biases the soldier's judgment——

Rib. Ha, biases!—I tell thee, priest, ambition——
When was it wanting in a churchman's soul?
More odious there, and more pernicious far,
Than when it fires the warrior's breast to glory.

But, down my rage—Your office should be peaceful—
Your habit's sacred——Let your speech be suited.
Sens. Reproving sir, you think you rail secure,
And so secure remain; howe'er, your case
Might bring ev'n your allegiance into question.
Rib. Said'st thou allegiance?—What a vile resort!
And would thy jaundic'd malice stain my fame?
I praise my foes, because they merit praise:
I'll praise them to the King, and after fight them.
My soul disdains such narrow-hearted spleen,
As owns no excellence beyond a tribe,
And hates, from envy, all superior merit.
Ath. Forbear, my lord; consider you're enrag'd
With one whose function does forbid revenge.
Rib. Why does the meddling priest provoke resentment?
Let him obey that function; preach repentance
To money-scraping misers, sordid slaves,
The cringing minions of corrupted courts,
The dregs of stews and tyrants of the gown:
There let his zeal be vehement and loud;
But not come here to sap the soldier's honour,
And teach inglorious lessons in a camp. [*Exit.*
Ath. Forgive him, good my lord: brave Ribemont
Is all the warrior, bold above restraint;
Of nature noble, but unpolish'd manners.
Sens. I do forgive him—Yet a time may come—
[*Aside.*
Ath. Sir, go we to the presence?
Sens. I attend you.
Ath. There grant, ye pow'rs! our counsels may procure
This kingdom's safety, and its peace insure. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The English Camp.

Enter SALISBURY *and* CHANDOS, *meeting.*

Chan. Good morrow, Salisbury, yon rising sun,
As was your wish, beholds us here encamp'd
Upon the plains of Poictiers.
Sal. Noble Chandos,
It was my wish; a wish for England's honour.
To Frenchmen, whom so much we've aw'd and humbled,
Methinks I would not give the least pretence
For arrogance and boasting.

Enter WARWICK.

War. Valiant lords,
Wild consternation reigns! Our scouts have brought
Intelligence the enemy surrounds us!
By sudden, secret marches, they have drawn
Their troops from ev'ry fertile province hither,
And cut off our retreat.
Sal. Why then we'll fight them.
War. Most fatal was our yesterday's advice,
But 'tis his highness' will we straight to counsel:
Haste, good my lords, for on a single hour,
Perhaps a minute, now our fate depends.

Sal. I'll not believe the French will dare attack us,
How great soe'er their numbers. But with words
We will not waste the time that may be precious;
Then to the Prince's tent, my lords, away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Tent in the English Camp.

Enter ARNOLD, *leading* MARIANA.

Arn. Now, lovely captive, wilt thou doubly triumph!
The happier cause of France at length prevails,
And we are all undone.
Mar. What mean you, Arnold?
Arn. Encircled here by thy whole country's force,
Unable to sustain their fierce assault,
And all retreat cut off, we have no prospect
But that of total slaughter.
Mar. Hear me, Heav'n!
Who oft has witness'd to the silent tears,
Stream'd down in gratitude for gen'rous treatment;
Now witness (spite of all my country suffers)
That these descend in pity for my foes.
Arn. The fatal accident again restores thee
To liberty, and safety, while from me
It cuts away all hopes of happiness.
I wish not to outlive the bloody hour
Must give thee to thy father, whose abhorrence
Of all that's English soon will interpose,
And plunge my soul for ever in despair.
Let then thy fancy image what I feel!——
Grief chokes the very passages of vent—
And I want utterance for——

Mar. There is no need.
I know thy heart, know all its tender feelings,
Know what sad tumults, doubts and fears create.
If to thy eloquence of words and looks,
My virgin modesty and captive state
Have hitherto forbid my tongue to answer,
Yet sure my eyes have told my heart was thine.
But now, away with fears and forms; distress
Bears me above restraint, and I will own
To Heav'n, to earth, to thee, my father, country,
That Arnold is most dear, most precious to me!
Arn. Hold, my transported heart!—Thou heav'nly maid——
What raptures rush at that enchanting sound!
Happy as I am now, destruction, come,
O'erwhelm me in this moment of my bliss;
Ne'er let me pine in hopeless anguish more,
But die thus clasp'd in Mariana's arms.
Mar. And will our fate—will cruel fate divide us?
Arn. Oh, do not name it! With the very thought
Frenzy assaults me. No, we must not, cannot,
Will not be parted—No——
Mar. Alas! I fear
The choice will not be ours. A father's pow'r,
If France prevails, for ever tears thee from me.
And must they conquer?—Oh, I find, I feel,
I've lost already all regard for France:
England's my country, any country's mine,
That gives me but my safety and my love——
Inform me—tell me—is there no escaping?
Arn. Thou wilt need none. For me and for the rest,
We have, alas! no prospect but of——
Mar. Stop!
Nor dare inflame a wild imagination,
Lest madness follow! 'midst relentless foes,
Methinks I see thee fall! Behold them strike!——

I hear thy groans! I see thy gushing blood!
Oh, save me from the horror!——Let us fly!——
Let us away this moment!—Let us——
Arn. Whither!
Where can we fly? All hope of flight is lost,
There is no possibility——
Mar. There is.
Let us, while yet occasion will permit,
Fly to my father.
Arn. Father!
Mar. He'll protect us.
Arn. Protect us!——Dire protection!—at the thought
My blood runs chill! and horror quite unmans me.
Mar. Think on the dangers that you brave by staying.
Arn. Do not awake, thou lovely pleader, do not,
Such tumult-working thoughts within a mind
On madness verging.
Mar. Let us then away.
Arn. Oh, not for worlds!—Not worlds should bribe me to it.
Mar. And wilt thou urge thou lov'st me?
Arn. More than life!
Mar. By Heav'n, 'tis false: the spirit, that's within thee,
Is not of worth to harbour aught so noble.
Arn. Will daring even to die convince thee?
Mar. No:
Death is a coward's refuge. Dare to live;
Dare wretchedness,—Reproach——
Arn. No more, no more——
Tempt me no more in vain——
Mar. Art thou so fix'd?
Arn. As fate——
Mar. I've done.
Arn. Then why that angry look?——
Mar. It is a curse entail'd upon the sex,

To have our counsel scorn'd, our love despis'd.
Go to thy ruin——to my ruin go——
I give thee up—and all my hopes for ever.
Arn. Let but reason
Weigh the dire consequence of such a flight.
Mar. The consequence! Why, what do you forsake
But certain slaughter?
Arn. Horrid—damning thought!
Mar. I hop'd my risking wretchedness for love,
Would have provok'd some emulation——
Arn. Oh!
Mar. But thou art poor, the hero of pretence;
And therefore thus—for ever——
Arn. Take me, lead——
No, stop!——it surely was some Siren's voice
Would lure me to destruction—Off!—stand off!—
Thou! thou art she that would ensnare my soul,
Ruin my peace, and sacrifice my fame.
But timely be advis'd: forbear to urge
A deed that all the earth would scorn me for,
All hell want plagues to punish.
Mar. Be undone——
Arn. Undone I am, whatever course I take——
Dreadful alternative! Despair, or death,
Or everlasting shame!
Mar. I did not pause:
I chose for Arnold's love to hazard all:
To suffer, if misfortune were our lot,
And never once reproach him or repine.
But he rejects such truth, such tenderness—
Arn. Oh, hear me, help me, save me, sacred pow'rs!
Mar. Thou'rt pale!——
Arn. Dizzy and sick—the objects swim before me.
Reach out thy hand to save me ere I sink:
Oh, what a deprivation of all pow'rs!

Lead me to my tent—I beg thee lead——
Oh, boasted manhood—how I feel thy weakness!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A magnificent Pavilion.

KING JOHN *appears seated in State. On Stools, below him, sit the* DAUPHIN, DUKE OF TOURAIN, ATHENS, SENS, RIBEMONT, CHARNEY, LORDS; ATTENDANTS *and* GUARDS, *all standing.*

King. At length, we've caught these lions in our toils,
These English spoilers, who through all our realm
Have mark'd their way with rapine, flames, and slaughters:
Now, by my sacred diadem, I swear,
Beyond a conqueror's joy my pleasure swells,
For that my foes have wrought their own confusion,
And found misfortunes where they meant to deal them.
What say you, lords, must softening pity sway?
Or shall we glut our vengeance with their blood?
Char. Heav'n gives them up the victims of your wrath;
Indulge it, then, to their destruction. Mercy
Would mark your majesty the foe of France.
Your bleeding country cries for retribution:
I join it, with a voice by woes enfeebled;
Hear, feel, and strike in such a moving cause,
The cause of wrongs, of wounds, of weeping age!
The widow'd bride, the childless father calls:
Oh, hear, redress,—revenge us, royal sir,
For vengeance now is in your pow'r to grant.

Rib. Anger and hatred are disgraceful motives,
Calm dignity should ever counsel kings,
And govern all their actions. When they strike,
It ne'er should be to gratify resentment,
But, like the arm omnipotent of Heav'n,
To further justice: to create an awe
May terrify from evil:—better minds—
And benefit society!

Ath. The Nuncio,
Who follow'd fast your majesty to Poictiers,
Hath sent to claim an audience in behalf
Of yon endanger'd English.

Sens. Do not hear him.

King. Say, Lord Archbishop, wherefore should we not?

Sens. Knowing your godlike and forgiving nature,
I fear 'twill rob you of much martial glory:
Else might your fame in arms, for this day's action,
Rival the boasts of Macedon or Rome!
And sure your valiant soldiers will repine,
To have the laurels, now so near their grasp,
Snatch'd from their hopes for ever.

Rib. Abject minion!
How shameful to that habit are such flatteries!
[*Aside.*

King. Yes, I well know my soldiers pant, impatient
To seize this feeble quarry. But our foes,
I must remind you, are so close beset,
That famine soon will throw them on your mercy.
Princes and lords, what cause have we to fight?
Why should we waste a drop of Gallic blood,
When conquest may be ours on cheaper terms?

Dauph. But will it suit the glory of our arms
To wait their inclination to surrender?
Or ev'n to grant such parley, as might plume
Their saucy pride to expect capitulation?
Oh, no, my royal father, rush at once,

O'erwhelm them, crush them, finish them by slaughter.

Rib. Think not, Prince Dauphin, they'll e'er stoop for terms:
Believe me, we have rather cause to expect
A fierce attack, to cut their passage through,
Or perish in the attempt. I know them well,
In many a field have try'd their stubborn spirit;
Have won some honour—by their King though vanquish'd:
And when I ponder their intrepid courage,
How much they dare to suffer and attempt,
I'm lost in wonder, and no Cressy need
To make me tremble to provoke their fury.

Dauph. Your tongue, the herald of your vanity,
Methinks, is loud in what were better lost
To all remembrance—a disgraceful tale.
To boast of honours from a victor's bounty,
Is stooping low—is taking abject fame.
If you have valour, give it manly sway,
Busy your sword—but let your tongue be silent.

Rib. My talent never 'twas to idly vaunt—

King. No more of this—presumptuous Ribemont.
Princes and lords, we are yet undetermin'd.
I've sent a spy, of known abilities,
To find out the condition of our foes;
From whose report, in council, we'll resolve
On measures that may promise most success.
Mean time, do you inform the Nuncio, Athens,
His audience shall be granted. Lords, lead on:
We'll make our morning's progress through the camp.
[*Exeunt* KING, PRINCE, *&c.—Trumpets.*

Rib. What boasts made I?
I told the truth, and wherefore then this taunt?
Shame on such modesty! The King, just now,
Nice as he seems in breeding and in forms,
With patience heard a supple, fawning priest——
Strip all the shrines of fam'd antiquity,

Ev'n make great Cæsar and the son of Philip
Resign their laurels to his nobler claim.
Ath. Brave Ribemont,
The King's distaste was that you prais'd his foes.
To talk of Cressy and of Edward's feats,
Was to remind him of our crown's disgrace:
'Twas to proclaim what we should wish forgotten,
Our slaughter'd armies, and our monarch's flight.
Rib. What, are our ears too delicate for truth?
If English valour has disgrac'd our arms,
Instead of mean forgetting, we should stamp
The hated image stronger on our minds;
For ever murmur and for ever rage,
'Till thence eras'd by nobler feats of arms.
Such are my thoughts, and such my resolution:
I share our country's scandal, and would join
My sword, my blood! to purge away the stain.
Ath. Here, then, occasion meets thy patriot wish;
Here you may help to blanch our sullied glory.
Rib. I differ, Athens, widely in opinion:
The harvest is too thin, the field too bare
To yield the reapers honour.
Would our exulting King acquire renown,
Let him reduce his numbers down to theirs.
Then sword to sword, and shield to shield, oppose,
In equal strife, these wonderous sons of war;
Their conquest would be glorious! But, as now,
With all our thousands and ten thousands join'd,
By Heaven! 'tis most infamous to fight.
Ath. I must away; my duty calls me hence.
I must applaud this generous regard
For a brave people that have done you honour;
Convinc'd, whene'er you face these fearless foes,
You'll fight them warmly as you've prais'd——
Rib. Farewell—On my soul,
I pity the brave handful we encircle,
And almost wish myself an Englishman,
To share a fate so noble. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

The English Camp.

Enter AUDLEY *and* CHANDOS, *meeting.*

Aud. You're well encounter'd, Chandos, where's the Prince?

Chan. Directing the entrenchments,
While with the meanest soldier he partakes
In ev'ry toil! inspiring, by example,
A glorious zeal and spirit thro' the camp.

Aud. Yet feels he, as the father of our host,
For every man's misfortune, but his own.
Thrice have I seen him, in successive rounds,
Kindle new courage in each drooping heart,
And drive all fear, all diffidence, away.
Yet on the task would tenderness intrude,
As dangers stole and imag'd on his mind:
When, pausing, he would turn his head aside,
Heave a sad sigh, and drop a tender tear.

Enter SALISBURY.

Chan. Well, what says Salisbury?

Sal. Why, faith, but little:
It is yon Frenchmen's place to talk at present.

Aud. How stand the troops?

Sal. Believe me, not so firm,
But our light-footed enemies, if dext'rous,
May trip up all their heels.

Chan. True to his humour!
My good Lord Salisbury will have his gibe,
Howe'er affliction wrings.

Sal. And wherefore not?
Will burial faces buy us our escape?
I wish they would: then no Hibernian hag,
Whose trade is sorrow, should out-sadden me.

But, as the business stands, to weep or laugh,
Alike is bootless; here is our dependence.
[*Touching his Sword.*
Aud. What are their numbers?
Chan. Full an hundred thousand.
Sal. Ours but some eight:—great odds, my friends!
No matter:
The more will be our glory, when we've beat them.
Aud. What swells their host so mightily (I'm told)
The Earls of Neydo, Saltsburg and Nassau,
Have join'd their troops. The Earl of Douglas too
Assists them with three thousand hardy Scots,
Their old and sure allies.
Chan. I hear the same.
The prince approaches, lords! [*Trumpets.*

Enter PRINCE, WARWICK, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Prince. Hah! said'st thou, Warwick!
Arnold gone over to the foe?
War. He is.
A trusty spy brought the intelligence,
Who saw him entering the adverse camp,
Leading his captive charge.
Prince. Impossible!
War. I've search'd his quarters since, myself, and there
Nor he nor Mariana can be found.
Prince. What has a prince that can attract or bind
The faith of friends, the gratitude of servants?
Blush, greatness, blush! Thy pow'r is all but poor,
Too impotent to bind one bosom to thee——
A blow like this I was not arm'd to meet——
It pierces to my soul.
Sal. All-righteous Heav'n,
Reward the villain's guilt?—Believe not, prince,

Throughout our host, another can be found,
That worlds would buy to such a base revolt.
Prince. I hope it, will believe it, Salisbury.
Yet must lament, that one has prov'd so worthless.—
My lords, I have dispatches in my hand,
Advising that the nuncio-cardinal,
Good Perigort, is now arriv'd at Poictiers,
And means to interpose in our behalf.
Aud. His interposing is a gen'rous office,
And I applaud it; but, believe me, prince,
Our foes will rate their mercy much too high.
I'd hope as soon a tiger, tasting blood,
Can feel compassion, and release his prey,
As that a Frenchman will forego advantage.
Prince. I've by the messenger, that brought my letters,
Sent him the terms on which I warrant treating.
The sum is, my consent to render back
The castles, towns, and plunder we have taken,
Since marching out of Bourdeaux: and to plight
My faith, that I, for seven succeeding years,
Will wield no hostile sword against their crown.
Sal. It is too much, my prince, it is too much.
Give o'er such traffic for inglorious safety.
Or let us die, or conquer.
Prince. Salisbury,
Rely upon a prince and soldier's promise,
That caution shan't betray us into meanness.
Heav'n knows, for me, I value life so little,
That I would spend it as an idle breath,
To serve my king, my country, nay, my friend.
But sure the voice of Heav'n and cry of nature
Are loud against the sacrifice of thousands
To giddy rashness. Oh! reflect, my friends,
I have a double delegated trust,
And must account to Heav'n and to my father,
For lives ignobly sav'd, or madly lost.
'Till Perigort shall therefore bring their terms,

Suspend we all resolves, but those receiv'd:
Determination must be expeditious:
For know our stock of stores will barely reach
To furnish out the present day's subsistence.
Aud. If so, necessity, the last sad guide
Of all misfortune's children, will command.
Chan. We must submit to what wise Heav'n decrees.
Prince. Let that great duty but direct the mind,
And men will all be happily resign'd:
Accept whate'er the Almighty deigns to give,
And die contented, or contented live:
Embrace the lot his providence ordains,
If deck'd with laurels, or depress'd with chains,
Inur'd to labour, or indulg'd with rest,
And think each moment, he decrees, the best.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The French Camp.

Enter ATHENS *and* RIBEMONT.

Rib. Lord Constable, I was not in the presence,
When Perigort had audience of the King;
Inform me, for I wish to know, does Peace
Her olive-garland weave? Or must the sword
Be kept unsheath'd, and blood-fed Vengeance live?

Ath. The king expecting me, I cannot tarry
To let your lordship know particulars;
But the good father, who even now set forward,
Carries such terms as, from my soul, I wish
Young Edward may accept: for 'tis resolv'd,
If they're rejected, instant to attack them.
Yonder's the fugitive, I see, advancing,
Who left their camp this morning. If we fight,
And you have there a friend you wish to save,
This man may point you to his post. Farewell.
[*Exit.*

Rib. This man——By Heav'n, there's treason in his aspect!
That cheerless gloom, those eyes that pore on earth,
That bended body, and those folded arms,
Are indications of a tortur'd mind,
And blazon equal villainy and shame.
In what a dire condition is the wretch,
Who, in the mirror of reflection, sees
The hideous stains of a polluted soul!——
To corners then, as does the loathsome toad,
He crawls in silence: there sequester'd lies
Hating himself, and fearing fellowship.

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. What have I done! And where is my reward?
Charney withholds his daughter from my arms,
My flatter'd recompense for——Hold, my brain!
Thought, that by timely coming might have sav'd me,
Is now too late, when all its office serves
But to awaken horror! [*Aside.*

Rib. I'll accost him.——
Are you an Englishman?

Arn. I had that name,
(Oh, killing question)——but have lost it now.

Rib. Lost it indeed!

Arn. Illustrious Ribemont! Pity, if you can,
A wretch——the most undone of all mankind.

Rib. I much mistake your visage, or I've seen you
In near attendance on the Prince of Wales.

Arn. I was indeed,—(Oh scandal to confess it)
I was his follower, was his humble friend;
He favour'd, cherish'd,—lov'd me!—Heav'nly pow'rs!
How shall I give my guilty story utterance!—
Level your fiery bolts!—Transfix me here!
Or hurl me howling to the hell I merit.

Rib. Invoke no pow'r, a conscience such as thine
Is hell enough for mortal to endure.
But let me ask thee, for my wonder prompts me,
What bait affords the world, that could induce thee
To wrong so godlike and so good a master?

Arn. True, he is all, is godlike, and is good!
Edward, my royal master, is indeed
A prince beyond example; Yet your heart,
If it has ever felt the power of beauty,
Must mitigate the crime of raging love.

Rib. Love!—Thou lost wretch!—And could so frail a fire
Consume whate'er was great and manly in thee?
Blot virtue out, and root each nobler passion
Forth from thy mind? The thirst of bright renown?
A patriot fond affection for thy country?
Zeal for thy monarch's glory? And the tie
Of sacred friendship—by thy prince ennobled?
Begone, and hide thy ignominious head,
Where human eye may never penetrate;
Avoid society, for all mankind
Will fly the fellowship of one like thee.

Arn. Heav'n! wherefore said'st thou, that we must not err,
And yet made woman?

Rib. Why accuse you Heav'n?

Curse your inglorious heart for wanting fire,
The fire that animates the nobly brave!
The fire that has renown'd the English name,
And made it such as ev'ry age to come
Shall strive to emulate—but never reach——
There thou wert mingled in a blaze of glory,
Great—to amazement great!—But now how fall'n!
Ev'n to the vilest of all vassal vileness,
The despicable state of female thraldom.

Arn. Untouch'd by passion, all may talk it well;
In speculation who was e'er unwise?
But appetites assault like furious storms,
O'erbearing all that should resist their rage,
'Till sinking reason's wreck'd; and then succeeds
A gloomy calm—in which reflection arms
Her scorpion brood—remorse, despair, and horror!

Rib. But could contrition ever yet restore
To radiant lustre a polluted fame?
Truth, the great touchstone of all human actions,
The fair foundation of applause or blame,
Has ting'd thy honour with too foul a stain,
For all repentant tears to wash away.
All eyes 'twill urge to dart their keen reproaches,
Each tongue to hiss, and ev'ry heart to heave
With indignation at thee.

Arn. All the pride,
That here should kindle into high resentment,
I find is gone! My spirit's sunk, debas'd!
My guilt unmans me—and I'm grown a coward.
[*Aside.*

Rib. The trumpets may awake, the clarions swell,
That noble ardour thou no more canst feel,
Disgrac'd from soldier to a renegade.
Anon, while o'er the dreadful field we drive,
Or dealing deaths, or daring slaught'ring swords!
Do thou at distance, like the dastard hare,
All trembling, seek thy safety. Thence away,
As fortune, or thy genius, may direct,

Thy conscience thy companion. But be sure,
Whatever land you burden with your weight,
Whatever people you hereafter join,
Tell but your tale, and they will all, like me,
Pronounce you abject, infamous, and hateful. [*Exit.*

Arn. Abject and hateful!——Infamous!——I'm all!——
The world has not another monster like me:
Nor hell in all its horrid store of evils,
Beyond what I deserve!——Already here
I feel the shafts, they rankle in my bosom;
And active thought anticipates damnation.

Enter MARIANA *and* LOUISA.

Mar. He's here! I've found my heart's companion out!
Rejoice, my Arnold, for my father softens;
He half forgets his hatred to thy country,
And hears with temper while I praise thy virtues.
We soon shall conquer. Ha! what mean those tears?
Why art thou thus?

Arn. And canst thou ask that question?
Thou soft seducer, thou enchanting mischief,
Give me again my innocence of soul,
Give me my forfeit honour blanch'd anew,
Cancel my treasons to my royal master,
Restore me to my country's lost esteem,
To the sweet hope of mercy from above,
And the calm comforts of a virtuous heart.

Mar. Sure kindness should not construe into guilt
My fond endeavours to preserve thee mine,
Life, love and freedom are before you, all,
Embrace the blessings, and we yet are happy.

Arn. What, with a conscience sore and gall'd like mine?
To stand the glance of scorn from ev'ry eye,
From ev'ry finger the indignant point?
A taunting Frenchman, with opprobrious tongue,

Pronounc'd me abject, infamous and hateful!
And yet I live—and yet you counsel life——
No, die I must—I will—but how, how, how?——
Nay, loose my arm; you strive in vain to hold me.

Mar. Upon my knees—See, see these speaking tears!

Arn. Be yet advis'd, nor urge me to an outrage.
Thy pow'r is lost—unhand me—then 'tis thus,
Thus I renounce thy beauties, thus thy guilt——
Life, love and treason I renounce for ever. [*Exit.*

Mar. Then welcome death, distraction, ev'ry curse!
Blast me, ye lightnings! strike me, roaring thunders!
Or let me tear, with my outrageous hands,
The peaceful bosom of the earth, and find
A refuge from my woes and life together.
[*Flinging herself on the Ground.*
Stand off! away! I will not be withheld——
I will indulge my phrenzy——Loss of reason
Is now but loss of torment——Cruel Arnold!
[*Scene closes.*

SCENE II.

The PRINCE'S *Tent.*

The PRINCE OF WALES *seated in State in his Tent; at the Entrance to which his Standard stands displayed; the Device, three Ostrich Feathers, with the Motto of "Ich Dien."* WARWICK, SALISBURY, AUDLEY, CHANDOS, NOBLES, OFFICERS, *and* GUARDS, *standing.*

Prince. I've sent my Lords of Oxford, Suffolk, Cobham,
To meet the Nuncio, and conduct him hither;

From whom we may expect to hear the terms
On which the French will deign to give us safety.
[*Trumpets.*

Chan. Those trumpets speak the Cardinal's arrival:—
And see! the lords conduct him to your presence!
[*Trumpets.*

Enter Three ENGLISH LORDS, *preceding* CARDINAL PERIGORT *and his Retinue. On the* NUNCIO'S *bowing, the* PRINCE *advances from his Seat, and embraces him.*

Prince. Lord Cardinal, most welcome to my arms:
I greet you thus as England's kindest friend,
Misfortune's refuge, and affliction's hope.
It is an office worthy of your goodness,
To step betwixt our danger and destruction,
Striving to ward from threat'ned thousands here,
The blow of fate.

Per. Grant, gracious Heav'n, I may!
For, from my soul, great prince, I wish you rescue;
And have conditions from your foes to offer,
Which, if accepted, save ye.

Prince. We attend. [*Takes his Seat.*

Per. No art for mild persuasion in your cause
Have I omitted: but imperious France,
Too fond of vengeance, and too vain of numbers,
Insists on terms, which only could be hop'd
From such a scanty, unprovided host;
And prudence will direct, from many evils,
To chuse the lightest. Their conditions are,
That, to the castles, towns, and plunder taken,
And offer'd now by you to be restor'd,
Your royal person, with an hundred knights,
Are to be added pris'ners at discretion.

Prince. Ha! pris'ners!

Aud. Oh, insolent, detested terms!

Sal. A hundred thousand first of Frenchmen fall,
And carrion taint the air!—I cannot hold. [*Aside.*
Prince. [*After a Pause.*] My good Lord Cardinal, what act of mine
Could ever usher to their minds a thought,
That I would so submit?
Per. Could I prescribe,
You should yourself be umpire of the terms;
For well I know your noble nature such,
That int'rest would be made the slave of honour.
But to whate'er I urg'd, the king reply'd,
Remember Cressy's fight! to us as fatal,
As that of Cannæ to the Roman state.
There fell two mighty kings, three sovereign princes,
Full thirty thousand valiant men of arms,
With all the flower of French nobility,
And of their firm allies; for which, (he cried)
What can redeem the glory of my crown,
But to behold those victors in our chains?——
It is a bitter potion; but reflect,
That royal John is noble, and will treat
Such foes with dignity, while fortune pays
Less than the stock of fame his father lost.
Prince. Yes, Philip lost the battle with the odds
Of three to one. In this, if they obtain it,
They have our numbers more than twelve times told,
And yet, my lord,
We'll face those numbers, fight them, bravely fall,
Ere stoop to linger loathsome life away
In infamy and bondage. Sir, I thank you——
I thank you from my soul, for these—for me——
But for the terms our foes demand, we scorn
Such vile conditions, and defy their swords——
Tell them, my lord, their hope's too proudly plum'd;
We will be conquer'd ere they call us captives.
Per. Famine or slaughter——
Prince. Let them both advance
In all their horrid, most tremendous forms!

They'll meet, in us, with men, who'll starve, bleed, die,
Ere wrong their country, or their own renown.
Sound, there, to arms!—My pious friend, farewell.
Disperse, my lords, and spirit up the troops:
Divide the last remains of our provision—
We shall require no more; for who survives
The fury of this day, will either find
Enough from booty—or a slave's allowance.

Per. How much at once I'm melted and amaz'd!
Stop, my lords, and give a soul of meekness scope,
In minutes of such peril. By the host
That circles Heaven's high throne, my bleeding heart
Is touch'd with so much tenderness and pity,
I cannot yield ye to the dire decision.
Let me, once more, with ev'ry moving art,
Each soft persuasion, try the Gallic king:
Perhaps he may relent—permit the trial——
I would preserve such worth, Heaven knows I would!
If hazard, labour, life, could buy your safety.

Prince. Lord Cardinal, your kindness quite unmans me:
My mind was arm'd for every rough encounter;
But such compassion saps my fortitude,
And forces tears—they flow, not for myself,
But these endanger'd followers of my fortunes,
Whom I behold as fathers, brothers, friends,
Here link'd together by the graceful bonds
Of amity and honour: all to me
For ever faithful and for ever dear,
Think it not weakness then that I lament them.

Per. It is the loveliest mark of royal virtue;
'Tis what demands our most exalted praise,
Is worthy of yourself, and must endear
The best of princes to the best of people.
Till my return be hope your comforter:
If 'tis within the scope of human means,
I'll ward the blow.

Prince. Good Heaven repay you, sir.

Tho' acts like yours carry such blessings with them
As are their full reward——My lord, farewell.
[*Exit* PERIGORT, *attended as he came in.*
Aud. Well, sir, how fare you now?
Prince. Oh, never better!
I've run no mean, inglorious, race; and now,
If it must end, 'tis no unlucky time.
As yon great planet, thro' its radiant course,
Shoots at his parting the most pleasing rays,
So to high characters a gallant death
Lends the best lustre, and ennobles all.
Aud. Why, there, my prince, you reach even virtue's summit;
For this I love you with a nobler flame,
Than proud prosperity could e'er inspire.
'Tis triumph, this, o'er death.
Prince. And what is death,
That dreadful evil to a guilty mind,
And awe of coward natures? 'Tis but rest,
Rest that should follow every arduous toil,
Relieve the valiant, and reward the good:
Nor is there aught in death to make it dreadful,
When fame is once establish'd.
War. That secure,
Our foes, who wail its loss, can ne'er recover
The glory ravish'd from them.
Chan. An hundred of us, with your royal person,
Deliver'd up their pris'ners at discretion!
The French have surely lost all modesty,
Or the remembrance of themselves and us.
Sal. Now, as I live, I wish we were at work.
And almost fear the Nuncio may succeed.
Methinks we should not lose the bless'd occasion,
Or for surpassing ev'ry former conquest,
Or gaining glorious death, immortal fame.
Prince. Then set we here ill-fortune at defiance,
Oh, my brave leaders! in this warm embrace,
[They all embrace.

Let us infuse that fortitude of soul,
To all but England's daring sons unknown!
Here part we, lords; attend your sev'ral duties.
Audley, distribute thro' the camp provisions——
Keep ev'ry soldier's spirits in a glow,
Till from the French this final message comes:
Then, if their pride denies us terms of honour,
We'll rush outrageous on their vaunting numbers;
And teach them, that with souls resolv'd, like ours,
Ev'n desperation points the way to conquest.
When (in defiance of superior might)
Plung'd in the dreadful storm of bloody fight,
Shall ev'ry Briton do his country right. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The French Camp.

Enter RIBEMONT.

Rib. The troops, array'd, stand ready to advance;
And this short pause, this silent interval,
With awful horror strikes upon my soul——
I know not whence it comes, but till this moment,
Ne'er did I feel such heaviness of heart.
Fear, thou art still a stranger here; and death
Have I oft seen in ev'ry form he wears;
Defy'd him, fac'd him, never fled him yet:
Nor has my conscience since contracted guilt,
The parent of dismay—then whence is this?

Perhaps 'tis pity for yon hopeless host——
Pity! For what?—The brave despise our pity;
For death, encounter'd in a noble cause,
Comes, like the gracious lord of toiling hinds,
To end all labours, and bestow reward.
Then let me shake this lethargy away——
By Heav'n, it will not off!——The sweat of death
Is on me—a cold tremor shakes my joints——
My feet seem rivetted—my blood congeals——
Almighty Pow'rs!——Thou ever awful form!
Why art thou present?—Wherefore?—What, a sigh!
Oh, smile of sweet relief!—If aught from Heav'n
A mortal ear be worthy to——Again
That piteous action! that dejected air!———
Speak out the cause—I beg thee, speak—'tis gone!—
Oh, return!
Unfold thy errand, tho' I die with hearing——

Enter ATHENS.

Ath. You're well encounter'd, Ribemont; the King,
Ere this, has Edward's answer; as I pass'd
The bound'ries of our camp,
I saw the Nuncio posting to our monarch's tent.
What means this, Ribemont?——Thou'rt lost in thought!

Rib. Athens!—I am unsoldier'd; I'm unmann'd—
Wonder you may, my noble friend; for see,
I shake, I tremble——

Ath. Say, at what?

Rib. Why—nothing.

Ath. Come, be thyself——For shame!———

Rib. Believe me, Athens,
I am not stricken with a coward's feeling:
Not all yon army to this sword oppos'd,
Should damp my vigour, or depress my heart.
Just now a melancholy seiz'd my soul,
A sinking; whence I knew not; till, at length,

My father's image to my sight appear'd,
And struck me motionless.
Ath. 'Twas only fancy.
Rib. Oh, no, my Athens! plainly I beheld
My father in the habit that he wore,
When, with paternal smiles, he hung this weapon
Upon my youthful thigh, bidding me use it
With honour, only in my country's cause.
Within my mind I treasur'd up the charge,
And sacred to the soldier's public call
Have worn it ever. Wherefore then this visit?
If 'tis an omen of impending guilt,
O, soul of him I honour, once again
Come from thy Heav'n, and tell me what it is,
Lest erring ignorance undo my fame.
Ath. Nought but a waking dream; a vapour'd brain.
Rib. Once his pale visage seem'd to wear a smile,
A look of approbation, not reproof;
But the next moment, with uplifted hands
And heaving bosom, sadly on the earth
He turn'd his eyes, and sorely seem'd to weep.
Then, shaking with a mournful glance his head,
He melted into air.
Ath. Pr'ythee, no more———
You talk'd of melancholy, that was all;
To-morrow we will laugh at this delusion.
Rib. To-morrow! Oh, that mention of to-morrow!—
There are opinions, Athens, that our friends
Can pass the boundaries of nature back,
To warn us when the hour of death is nigh.
If that thy business was, thou awful shade!
I thank thee, and this interval of life,
However short, which Heaven vouchsafes me yet,
I will endeavour, as I ought, to spend.
Ath. See, thro' yon clouds of dust, with how much speed
The Nuncio hastens to the English camp!

Perhaps the terms for safety are agreed;
Then where's a meaning for thy fancy'd vision?
Rib. No matter where; my spirits are grown light;
Again the bright'ning fires of glory blaze:
Yes, virtue calls, and Ribemont obeys.
Yes, Athens, yes, amid the fierce alarms,
Where Edward thunders in vindictive arms,
Shalt thou behold me, in my country's cause,
Rise in renown, or perish with applause. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The PRINCE *of* WALES'S *Tent.*

Enter PRINCE, CHANDOS, *and* ATTENDANTS, *meeting* AUDLEY.

Prince. Well, Audley, are the soldiers all refresh'd?
Aud. All: and altho' perchance their last of meals,
It seem'd so cheerful as surpass'd my hope;
Still joining hands, as off they drain'd the bowl,
Success to England's arms, was all the cry.
At length a hoary vet'ran rais'd his voice,
And thus address'd his fellows: Courage, brothers!
The French have never beat us, nor shall now.
Our great Third Edward's fortune waits our arms;
And his brave son, whose formidable helmet
Nods terror to our foes, directs the fight.
In his black armour, we will soon behold him
Piercing their throng'd battalions—Shall not we,
At humble distance, emulate his ardour,
And gather laurels to adorn his triumph?———
Then did they smile again, shake hands, and shout;
While, quite transported at the pleasing sight,
I wept insensibly with love and joy.

Prince. I too could weep—Oh, Audley, Chandos, there,
There rest I all my hope!——My honest soldiers,
I know will do their duty.

Enter a GENTLEMAN.

Gent. Royal sir,
A person, muffled in a close disguise,
Arriv'd this instant from the adverse camp,
As he reports, solicits to receive
An audience of your highness, and alone.

Prince. Retire, my lords——Conduct him straightway in. [*Exit* GENT.

Chan. Your highness will not trust yourself unguarded?
It may be dangerous. Consider, sir——

Prince. Caution is now my slave, and fear I scorn:
This is no hour for idle apprehensions.
[*Exeunt* LORDS, &c.

Enter ARNOLD *in a Disguise, which he throws off.*

Your business, sir, with—Arnold!—Get thee hence.

Arn. Behold a wretch laid prostrate at your feet,
His guilty neck ev'n humbled to the earth;
Tread on it, sir——it is most fit you should.
I am unworthy life, nor hope compassion——
But could not die till here I'd stream'd my tears,
In token of contrition, pain and shame.

Prince. Up, and this instant from my sight remove,
Ere indignation urges me to pay
Thy horrid treasons with a traitor's fate.

Arn. Death if I'd fear'd, I had not ventur'd hither;
Conscious I merit all you can inflict:
Thus, on my knees, lay I my life before you,
Nor ask remission of the heavy sentence
Your justice must pronounce. Yet, royal sir,
One little favour let me humbly hope:
(*And* may the blessings of high Heav'n repay it!)

'Tis when you shall report my crime and suffering,
Only to add—He gave himself to death
The voluntary victim of remorse.
Prince. I shall disgrace my soldiership, and melt
To woman's weakness, at a villain's sorrow!
Oh, justice, with thy fillet seal my eyes,
Shut out at once his tears, and hide my own! [*Aside.*
Arn. Am I rejected in my low petition
For such a boon?—Nor can I yet complain:
Your royal favours follow approbation,
And I, of all mankind, have least pretence
To hope the bounty of a word to ease me.
Prince. Rise, Arnold—Thou wert long my chosen servant:
An infant fondness was our early tie;
But with our years (companions as we liv'd)
Affection rooted, and esteem grew love.
Was it for thee, in fortune's first assault,
To be the man, the only to forsake me?
Was it for thee, in whom my heart delighted,
Was it for thee——
In spite of me my eyes will overflow,
And I must weep the wrongs I should revenge.
Arn. Tears for such guilt as mine! Oh, blasting sight!
Cover me, mountains—hide me and my shame!——
A traitor's fate would here be kind relief
From the excessive anguish I endure.
Prince. Having thus fairly stated our account,
How great's the balance that appears against thee!
And what remains?—I will not more reproach thee.
Love thee I must not, and 'twere guilt to pity.
All that with honour I can grant is this:
Live—but remove for ever from my sight.
If I escape the dangers that surround me,
I must forget that Arnold e'er had being:
I must forget, in pity to mankind,

(Lest it should freeze affection in my heart)
That e'er such friendship met with such return.
Arn. Oh, mercy more afflicting than ev'n rage!—
Great sir, (forgive intrusion on your goodness)
My boon you have mistaken, life I ask'd not;
'Twas but to witness to the deep remorse,
That with a harpy's talons tears my bosom.
But as my miseries have touch'd your soul,
And gain'd remission of a traitor's fate,
Oh, add one favour, and complete my wishes!
To the dear country, that must scorn my name,
(Tho' I still love it as I honour you)
Permit my sword to lend its little aid,
To pay a dying tribute—Grant but that,
And I will weep my gratitude with blood.
Prince. Stain'd and polluted as my eyes behold thee,
Honour no longer can endure thy sight.
If 'tis in valour to accomplish it,
Redeem thy reputation; but if not,
To fall in fight will be thy happiest hope.
Away, nor more reply. [*Exit* ARNOLD.
If passions conquer'd are our noblest boasts,
Misruling Anger, ever mad Revenge,
And thou, too partial biaser, Affection,
Confess I once have acted as I ought. [*Trumpets.*

Enter WARWICK, SALISBURY, AUDLEY, CHANDOS, LORDS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Oh, welcome, friends! But, hark! the Cardinal!
[*Trumpets.*

Enter Cardinal PERIGORT, *attended.*

Well, gen'rous advocate, we wait our doom.
Per. Prepare, prepare for an immediate battle:
Inflexible is France in her demands,
And all my pray'rs and tears have prov'd in vain.

Prince. Lord Cardinal,
If France insists so high, it shall be try'd;
The desp'rate chance of battle shall be try'd——
The Fates attend, the balance is prepar'd,
And whosoe'er shall have the lot to mount,
May Heav'n stretch wide its everlasting doors,
And give them happy entrance all!

Per. Amen——
Illustrious prince, and you his noble followers,
Remains there aught that I can do to serve ye?
My function suits not with a field of slaughter;
In Poictiers, therefore, must I seek my safety.
There, while the battle rages, round and round
My beads shall drop to pray'rs, that ev'ry saint
Will succour and support the English arms.
But should the fortune of your foes prevail,
And leave you victims to immortal honour,
The pious offices I'll make my own,
O'er ev'ry grave to breathe a thousand blessings,
And water all your ashes with my tears.

Prince. My gentle friend, such goodness will renown you.

Per. Take from my hand, my heart, my very soul,
My amplest benediction to you all. [*They bow.*
I now can stifle in my tears no longer——
Oh, gallant prince, farewell! farewell to all.
Heav'n guard your lives, and give your arms success!
[*Exit with his* ATTENDANTS.

[*On the* CARDINAL'S *going out, the* PRINCE *and* LORDS *continue for some time fixed and mute.*

Aud. You loiter, sir. Our enemies advance,
And we're in no array.

Prince. My thoughts were absent. Away, despatch—
Marshal the army by the plan I gave,
Then march it straight to yonder eminence,
Whence I'll endeavour to inflame their zeal,
And fit them for the toils this day demands.

Now does the medley war begin to work;
A thousand hopes and fears begin to crowd upon me.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Part of the English Camp.

Enter MARIANA *and* LOUISA.

Lou. Thus, madam, has obedience prov'd my duty;
The hurry and confusion of the field
Giving us opportunity to 'scape,
We've reach'd the English camp. But whither now?
Where would you bend your course? Behold around,
How the arm'd soldiers, as they form in ranks,
Dart from impassion'd looks ten thousand terrors!
The scene is dreadful!

Mar. Then it suits my mind,
The seat of horrors, terrible to bear.
Oh, let me find him!——

Lou. Dearest lady, think——
Nor follow one, that rudely spurn'd you from him.

Mar. It was not Arnold spurn'd me, 'twas his guilt,
The guilt I plung'd him in. Louisa, thou
Hast ne'er experienc'd passion in extremes,
Or thou would'st know, that love, and hate, and scorn,
All opposites, together meet, and blend
In the wild whirl of a distracted soul.

Lou. Behold, he comes!

Mar. Support me, gracious pow'rs!

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. Ha! Mariana!—When will torture end! [*Aside.*

Mar. How shall I stand the shock of his reproaches! [*Aside.*

Arn. Why art thou here! Oh, why, unhappy maid?

Mar. Since my too fatal rashness wrought thy ruin,
'Tis fit, at least, that I should share it with thee.
Therefore, my friends, my father, and my country,
I have forsook for ever, and am come
To claim a portion here in all you suffer.

Arn. Return again, I beg thee, I conjure thee,
By all the wond'rous love that fir'd our hearts,
Go to thy father back, and think no more
Of a lost wretch, who hastens to oblivion.

Mar. Request it not; I never will forsake thee:
One fortune shall conduct, one fate involve us.
I'll show the world that my unhappy crime
Was neither child of treachery or fear;
But love, love only: and the guilt it caus'd,
As I inspir'd, I'll share its punishment.

Arn. You cannot, nay, you must not—think not of it.
You broke no faith; I only was to blame.
Be timely, then, in thy retreat; and Heav'n,
And all good angels guard thee! On thy lips
I'll seal my fervent pray'rs for blessings on thee.
[*Kisses her.*
Oh, what a treasure does my soul give up,
A sacrifice to honour—— [*Going—Trumpet.*
That trumpet summons me! I must away.
Oh, measure by thy own the pangs I feel! [*Exit.*

Mar. Then they are mighty; not to be express'd;
Not to be borne, nor ever to be cur'd.
My head runs round, my bursting brain divides!

Lou. Hence, my dear lady; for your peace, go hence.

Mar. I'll dig these eyes out; these pernicious eyes,
Enslaving Arnold, have undone him—Ha! [*Trumpet.*

That raven trumpet sounds the knell of death!
Behold—the dreadful, bloody work begins——
What ghastly wounds! what piteous, piercing shrieks!
Oh, stop that fatal faulchion! if it falls,
It kills my Arnold!—Save him, save him, save——
[*Exit, running:* LOUISA *follows.*

SCENE IV.

A distant Prospect of a Camp.

Enter PRINCE.

Prince. The hour advances, the decisive hour,
That lifts me to the summit of renown,
Or leaves me on the earth a breathless corse.
The buz and bustle of the field before me,
The twang of bow-strings, and the clash of spears,
With ev'ry circumstance of preparation,
Strike with an awful horror! Shouts are echo'd,
To drown dismay, and blow up resolution
Ev'n to its utmost swell—From hearts so firm,
Whom dangers fortify, and toils inspire,
What has a leader not to hope? And yet
The weight of apprehension sinks me down.
O Soul of Nature, great eternal Cause, [*Kneels.*
Who gave and govern'st all that's here below,
'Tis by the aid of thy almighty arm
The weak exist, the virtuous are secure.
If to your sacred laws obedient ever,
My sword, my soul, have own'd no other guide;
Oh, if your honour, if the rights of men,
My country's happiness, my king's renown,
Were motives worthy of a warrior's zeal,
Crown your poor servant with success this day,
And be the praise thy own. [Rises.

Enter AUDLEY.

Aud. Now, royal Edward, is the hour at hand,
That shall, beyond the boast of ancient story,
Ennoble English arms. Forgive, my hero,
That I presume so far, but I have sworn
To rise your rival in the common fight:
We'll start together for the goal of glory,
And work such wonders, that our fear-struck foes
Shall call us more than mortals.

Prince. Audley, thy soul is noble; then, together,
(Safe from the prying eye of observation)
Let us unmask our hearts. Alas, my friend,
To such a dreadful precipice we're got,
It giddies to look down! No hold, no hope,
For nothing but a miracle can save us.
Say, Audley, to my father, to my country,
Living they had my service—at my death,
My pray'rs and wishes for eternal welfare.

Aud. Request not that, which, if the day be lost,
I ne'er shall execute. I have to ask
A favour, which I hope you'll not refuse.

Prince. Nothing that suits my Audley to solicit.

Aud. It is, that I may be the first to charge:
I think I can rely upon my courage
To set a good example.

Prince. Then be it so. And hark! [*Trumpets.*
The troops approach. Audley, to your station.
[*Trumpets.*

Enter WARWICK, SALISBURY, CHANDOS, *and other* COMMANDERS. *Parties of* SOLDIERS *appear between all the Wings, with* OFFICERS *leading them, so seeming as if the whole Army was drawn up.*

Prince. Countrymen,
We're here assembled for the toughest fight,
That ever strain'd the force of English arms.

See yon wide field with glitt'ring numbers gay!
Vain of their strength, they challenge us for slaves,
And bid us yield, their pris'ners at discretion.
If there's an Englishman among ye all,
Whose soul can basely truckle to such bondage,
Let him depart. For me, I swear, by Heav'n,
By my great father's soul, and by my fame,
My country ne'er shall pay a ransome for me!
Nor will I stoop to drag out life in bondage,
And take my pittance from a Frenchman's hands:
This I resolve, and hope, brave countrymen,
Ye all resolve the same,

Sold. All, all.

Sal. Conquest or death is ev'ry Briton's choice.

Prince. Oh, glorious choice! And know, my gallant soldiers,
That valour is superior far to numbers.
There are no odds against the truly brave:
Let us resolve on conquest, and 'tis ours.
But should the worst, that can befal us, death!
'Twill be a fate to envy more than pity.
And we have fathers, brothers, sons, or friends,
That will revenge our slaughter.

Sal. On, lead on, my gallant prince.

Prince. I see the gen'rous indignation rise,
That soon will shake the boasted pow'r of France:
Follow your standards with a fearless spirit;
Follow the great examples of your sires;
Follow the noble genius that inspires ye;
Follow, in me, your brother, prince, and friend.
Draw, fellow-soldiers, catch th' inspiring flame;
We fight for England, liberty, and fame.

[*They draw their Swords, and go out; Trumpets sounding.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An extensive Plain, with the distant View of a Town; on one Side, a Camp on a Level, on the other, another on a rising Ground.

Enter PRINCE, WARWICK, CHANDOS, *and* ATTENDANTS—*their Swords drawn.*

Prince. Haste to my Lord of Oxford, and request
He ply his archers with redoubled vigour.
I see already they've confus'd the foe;
Their ranks are broken, and they seem to doubt,
If they should stand or fly.
Chan. Then now's the time
To press them with the weight of all our force;
For Frenchmen, if they're once dismay'd, are lost.
[*Exit.*
War. Excess of fury marks the battle yonder;
Lord Salisbury there sustains a heavy charge.
Prince. Warwick, away, and reinforce his party,
Or numbers may o'erbear him. Fly this instant.
[*Exit* WARWICK.
Oh, for an arm of iron, but to answer
The mighty ardour that inflames my soul! [*Exeunt.*

Enter ARNOLD, *bloody.*

Arn. Yet more of Gallic blood—I must have more,
To wash my stains of infamy away.
What, are the multitudes o'erthrown already?

Greater must down to gratify my rage,
And in my country's vengeance crown my own.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Part of the Field.

Enter KING JOHN, TOURAIN, ATHENS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

King. By Heav'n, a panic seizes all my troops!
Inform me, Athens, what's the cause of this?
Ath. Some parties, that the Prince of Wales detach'd
Round yonder mountain, have attack'd our rear;
And the division which the Dauphin led
Dispersing in confusion, they have pierc'd
With fury to the centre of our host.
King. Fly, Athens, to my son, with my command,
That he collect again his scatter'd men,
And lead them to our succour. Shameful sight!
[*Exit* ATHENS.
That such a handful should confound us thus!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Changes.

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. My arm begins to weary with the fight.
Death, I have cramm'd thy rav'nous jaws with offal;
Now, turn my friend, and give me timely rescue.

Enter RIBEMONT.

Rib. Thou double traitor, must I stain my sword,
With the foul streams that circle in thy veins,
Who art so base, so branded?—Infamous!
By Heav'n, it almost is a guilt to fight thee.
Arn. Here I can answer, for my cause is good;
It is my country's. And, thou haughty lord,
Think not thou e'er again shalt awe my soul,
Or, unchastis'd, reproach me with a crime
I loath, and here am come to expiate.
The earth I've crimson'd with thy country's blood;
And if the pow'rs, to what I've shed already,
Will add but Ribemont's, I'll ask no more:
The foe I next may meet to mine is welcome.
Rib. Can aught in valour purge thy Æthiop soul,
Expunge thy blots, and rank thee with the brave?
Dar'st thou assert the cause thou hast betray'd,
Or hope a second guilt atones the first?
No! the joint vengeance of wrong'd France and England
I send in this—[ARNOLD *falls.*]——There's something of thy due;
To infamy and hell I leave the rest. [*Exit.*
Arn. Death I have caught: his shaft is in my heart.
It tugs with nature. When shall I get free?

Enter PRINCE, CHANDOS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Prince. Slaughter hath wanton'd here! What streams of blood!
What heaps of mangled bodies strew the ground!
Death has had able ministers at work;
A pompous tribute they have paid indeed!
Arnold! Hast thou done this?
Arn. Offended prince,
You find my fluttering soul upon the wing.

All a poor desp'rate and despairing wretch
Could do, this arm hath wrought.
Prince. Thrice have I mark'd
Thy valour wonderful.
Arn. All worthless quite.—
That I could pay a hundred thousand lives,
In gratitude to you, and love for England!
But feeble nature fail'd my better wish.
So here I render up a loathsome life——
Prince. Talk not of dying—Live, and still be mine.
Arn. Too gen'rous prince! Could your benignant heart
Forgive and cherish one, who is so vile?
Prince. As Heav'n may pardon me, thy crime's forgot.
Arn. Then I am happy. Hear it, sacred pow'rs,
And give him glory great, as is his goodness.
I go—Methinks the gloomy way before me
Is stripp'd of half its horrors. Friendly death,
Receive a parting, pity'd, pardon'd——Oh! [*Dies.*
Chan. He is gone.
Prince. Proving, my noble friend,
His soul was genuine English, and could tow'r
O'er all calamities but conscious guilt.
Chan. Heav'n's pardon greet him—Mighty prince, behold,
Where gallant Audley, like a tempest, pours
Destruction thro' the thickest ranks of foes!
Prince. Oh, Chandos, with astonishment my eye
Hath mark'd his valiant wonder-working sword.
Come, let us kindle at the great example,
And emulate the ardour we admire. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

The French Camp.

Enter KING JOHN, TOURAIN, *and* ATTENDANTS.

King. [*Turning back.*] Rally our men, my valiant Lord of Ewe,
Or we are all undone. O gracious Heav'n,
How has a kingdom crumbled from my grasp!
My dear Tourain, to what have I reduc'd thee!
For thee, I could weep blood;—for thee I fear
To lose a life no longer worth my care,
Stripp'd as I am of dignity and fame.

Tour. I ask of Heav'n but to partake your fortune!

King. Tears will have way——O majesty, give place,
For nature governs now! Almighty pow'rs!
Must children, and must kingdoms suffer thus,
Because my pride to reason shut my ears,
When dazzled with the giddy phantom, glory,
I scorn'd the terms that might have blest us all?—
Too late—It is the curse of giddy mortals,
To see their errors and repent too late.

Tour. For safety, sir, away——

King. Dare not to urge it—I disdain the thought!
Though all desert me, singly will I stand
And face my foes, 'till, cover'd o'er with wounds,
I gain a fate becoming of a king. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

The Field of Battle.

Enter RIBEMONT.

Rib. Ill-fated Athens, thou hast breath'd thy last,—
But wherefore call'd I thee ill-fated? since
Death but prevented thee the curse of seeing
Our arms dishonour'd, and our country lost!
Now, sacred soul of him who gave me life,
The purpose of thy visit is explain'd.
No private evil, not a fate like mine——
That were a trivial call for thee to earth:
It was to warn me of a heavier loss,
Our diadem and fame.—Ha!—I'm alone
Amidst a field of foes!——let me collect
A decent vigour, like the hunted lion,
With an assault to dignify my fall,
And not shrink, tamely, to a vulgar fate.

Enter AUDLEY.

Aud. For England——
Rib. France—By Heav'n, the gállant Audley!—
Now, fortune, I forgive thy partial dealing;
For, next to victory, my wish has been
To fall by so renown'd an arm as Audley's.
Aud. Brave Ribemont, I will return thy praise,
And own thee noblest of my country's foes.
Had we been natives of one happy land,
The gen'rous semblance of our souls had link'd us
In friendship's dearest bonds.

Rib. But here we stand
Determin'd champions in opposing lists,
Each, in his country's cause, the other's foe.
Come, for I long to try this season'd blade
Upon true mettle. If I conquer thee,
I take no portion of the foul disgrace,
Which Heav'n this day has thrown upon our arms:
But should my fortune, (as perhaps it may)
Like my poor country's, bow the head to England,
Then, Audley, wilt thou add to thy renown
By doing what the King has only done,
Baffle the warrior he pronounc'd a brave one?
Now for determination——

Aud. Hold a moment.——
Look on the field, brave Ribemont; behold,
Thou hast no passage for escape left open!
Me should'st thou vanquish; from the thousands round thee,
Captivity or death must be thy lot.
Then make no havoc of great qualities,
Nor to thy kingdom lose, through desperation,
The bravest arms and noblest heart it boasts.
Give my fond wish the power but to protect thee:
Resign thy sword—I'll prove no conqueror,
But clasp thee with the warmth of generous friendship.

Rib. Audley, I thank thee; but my hour is come—
You bid me look upon the field: look thou,
And see the glory of my country blasted!
To lose a day like this!—and to survive it—
Would be a wretchedness I'll ne'er endure.
No: in a nation's fate be mine involv'd:
To fall with France is now the only means
To satisfy my soul, and save my fame.

Aud. Oh, yet——

Rib. I'm fix'd.

Aud. Why, then—for England this—
Rib. And this for France——
[*They fight*, RIBEMONT *falls, and* AUDLEY *is wounded, and rests upon his Sword.*
Inward I bleed: the streams of life run fast,
And all, that did invigorate, deserts me.
Audley, the palm of victory is thine;
I yield, I die—but glory in my fall.
It is beneath the noblest English arm!
And that secures my fame.
Report me truly as thy sword has found——
I know thou wilt; and, in the long hereafter,
If we can meet, I'll thank thee for't.—Farewell.
[*Dies.*
Aud. Farewell, brave Ribemont; thou fearless soldier,
Peace to thy ashes—to thy soul reward——
And honour crown thy name! A foe could weep!
But pity would disgrace a death like thine.
[*Trumpets.*

Enter PRINCE, CHANDOS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Prince. [*Turning back.*] Give instant orders to recall our parties;
I will not hazard, by a rash pursuit,
So vast a victory!
England, my Chandos, triumphs! For our arms
Have won the noblest field, that e'er was fought!
Ha! Audley bleeding!—Then must conquest mourn,
And I lament, amidst my spoils and trophies,
The best of nobles, warriors, and of friends.
Aud. Faint with the loss of blood—I hope no more.
Prince. Summon assistance; all that wealth can reach
To him, who gives me but his life's assurance.
[*Exit an* ATTENDANT.

Advance the banner o'er us.—Long, oh, long,
May'st thou survive to wear this well won honour.
[*He knights and embraces* AUDLEY.
My bravest knight, my most belov'd of men!
Lead him away, repose him in his tent.
Soon as the hurry of the field is o'er,
I'll come in person, and attend his cure.
Aud. There lifeless lies the arm, that gave the wound;
A braver soldier never press'd the earth!
On his remains let due distinction wait,
To dignify the dust that once was noble.
[*He is led off.*
Prince. The valiant Ribemont!
See, that every solemn rite be paid:
With honours suited to his gallant life,
Conduct the body to its peaceful grave.
[RIBEMONT *carried off.*
Chan. The field is thinn'd! And now far off remov'd,
The dying voice of tumult faintly sounds.
Prince. An awful horror!—The sad scene before us,
Pompous with desolation! as declines
The glow and ardour of our martial flame,
Softens the mind to mournful meditation.
How many souls have ta'en eternal flight,
Who, but this very morning, on the wing
Of expectation, look'd through years to come!
So have the bubbles of their hopes been broke;
So may it fare with us:——And such is life!
All-righteous Heav'n! thy hand is here conspicuous!
Pride and presumption finish thus their shame.
[*Shout.*
Hark!
Chan. 'Tis a train of pris'ners bringing hither.

Enter SALISBURY, *with* OFFICERS *and* SOLDIERS, *conducting* KING JOHN, *the* DUKE OF TOURAIN, ARCHBISHOP OF SENS, *and several* FRENCH NOBLEMEN, *Prisoners.*

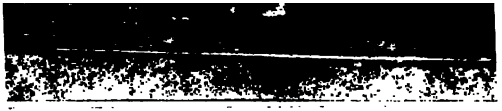
Prince. Brave Salisbury, you're welcome to my arms.
The field is ours!
Sal. And nobly was it fought!
Behold, my prince, how well we have acquitted
The claims our adversaries made on us.
Your veteran swordsman, Sir John Pelham, sends
This royal trophy to adorn your triumph.
Prince. Most wise and valiant of all christian kings,
Rever'd for virtues, and renown'd in arms!
That I behold you thus, dissolves my heart
With tender feeling; let your godlike soul
Strive with adversity, and still preserve,
As well you may, your royal mind unconquer'd.
Fortune is partial in her distributions:
Could merit always challenge its reward,
In other lights we might this hour have stood,
Perhaps the victor you, and I the captive:
But fear no wrong, the good should never fear it.
For yourself, and this illustrious train,
My care shall be to treat you as I ought.
King. My gracious conqueror, and kindest cousin,
This goodness more than victory renowns you!
That I'm unfortunate is no reproach,
I brav'd all dangers as became a king.
'Till by my coward subjects left and lost.
Prince. Lead to my tent: when we are there arriv'd,
Prepare a banquet with all princely pomp,
At which I'll wait, and serve my royal guests.
My noble lords, and brave companions all,
I leave your praise for the wide world to sound!

Nor can the voice of fame, however loud,
Out-speak the merit of your matchless deeds.
O, may Britannia's sons, through ev'ry age,
As they shall read of this so great achievement,
Feel the recorded victory inspire
An emulation of our martial fire,
When future wrongs their ardour shall excite,
And future princes lead them forth to fight!
'Till, by repeated conquests, they obtain
A pow'r to awe the earth and rule the main!
Each tyrant fetter gloriously unbind,
And give their liberty to all mankind.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*

THE END.

End



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